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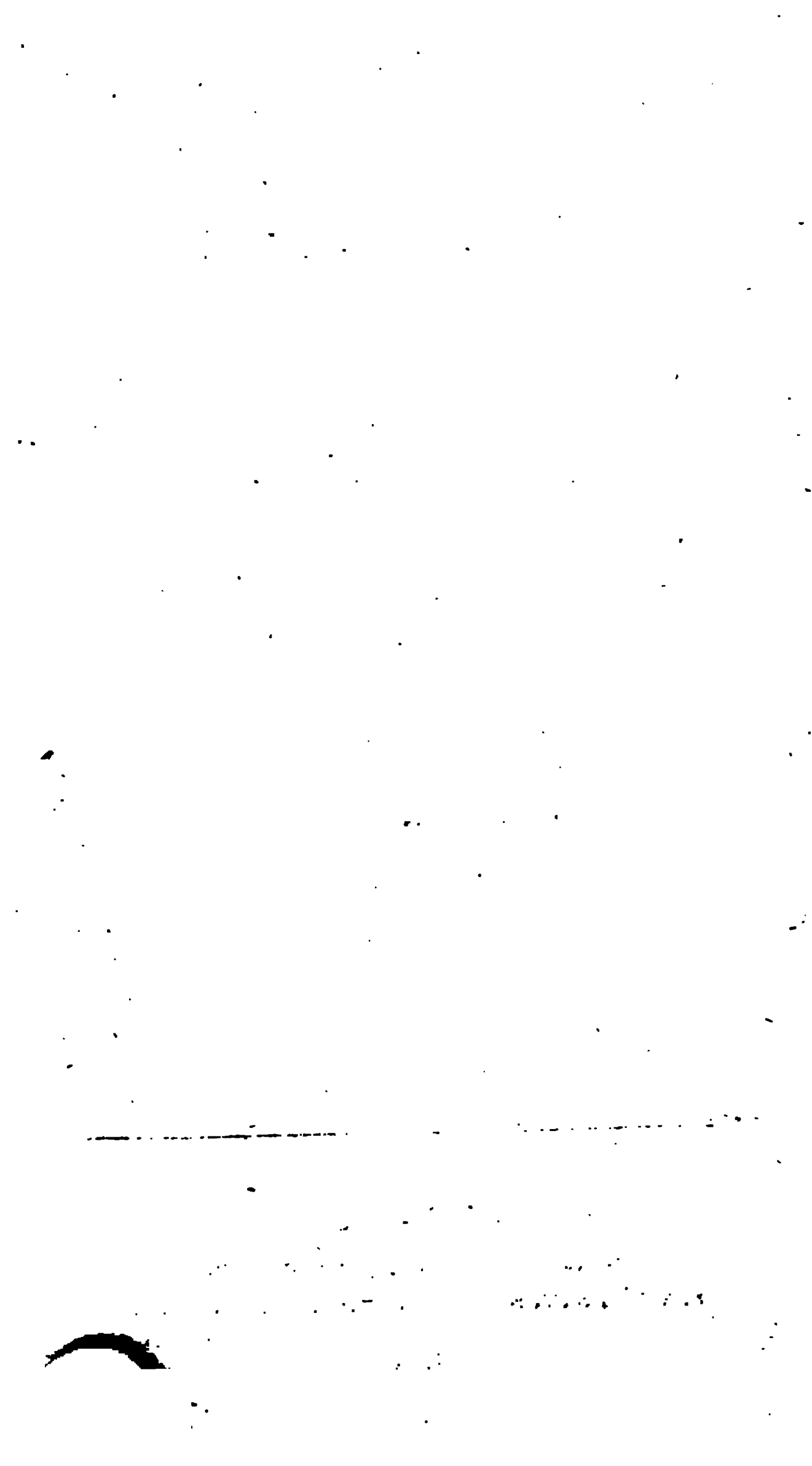


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ALUREDUS.

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ALUREDUS,  
KNIGHT OF MALTA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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# A L U R E D U S.

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## LETTER X.

*Lady Nelson to Mrs. Selwin.*

Montpellier.

**I** SAID, my dear Madam, you would be startled at the extraordinary size of a packet I sent off two days ago ; I did not then think I should have occasion to write again so soon ; but an incident I have since encountered determines me to add another letter to those which perhaps you have but just received. I

VOL. II.

B

informed



informed you in my last I was that evening to attend Madame Tourville to the Ball. We found the Rooms amazingly crowded, and in my opinion disagreeable enough. The indifference, if not discontent, with which I entered this assembly, was still predominant. I felt myself incommoded—I complained of the violent heat, though few besides seemed sensible of any inconveniency—I had it all to myself. What inconvenience to minds at ease could proceed from a genteel multitude who were gratified by their own appearance, and transported with the music and splendour by which they were surrounded? All but myself were ready to join with vivacity in the amusements of the place. I thought of our dear Count—I thought of him with too much regret to have any relish for

for the pleasures going forwards. A small apartment adjoining to the ball-room attracted my notice, for no other reason but that it was deserted. Thither I retired, where throwing up a window, I had the double enjoyment of a reviving breeze, and the free indulgence of my own silent reflections—reflections which were uninterruptedly employed on the Count Aluredus. I ran over his whole sad story in the pastry-cook's shop; I was stupefied with grief—the poor bent sixpence—I listened with him at the door—I rushed with him into his sister's apartment—I felt the emaciated arms of the phantom—I saw her faint in his embraces. Were these, my dear mother—were these reflections for a ball-room? I have done with them—they will too deeply affect you. Thus situ-

ated, I was broke in upon by Madame Tourville, the Marquis Pierpoint, and several others—my reverie ended with their presence. They rallied me without mercy, on having surprized me so seriously disposed. I pleaded a headache—in truth it was a heart-ache.—I pleaded my being overcome with the warmth of the room; but, after all, was obliged to adopt, in some measure, their gaiety. They forced me to put on a shew of liveliness. A spirited conversation ensued; we were still at the window. A superb equipage drew up just beneath where we stood—it arrested our attention—our eyes were all turned towards it. That coach, cried the Marquis, is the Duke de Deni's;—observe Ladies a Cicisbeo, or a husband; for his Grace is at liberty to make a second choice.—Look—he is  
just

just stepping from the carriage;—beautiful as you all are, you will not find him unworthy your attractions. I think I should have known him for the Count's brother, if the Marquis had not announced him; they very much resemble each other, with this difference, though the Duke is one year older than the Count, he looks at least ten years younger; besides, the Duke dresses magnificently showy, has an air of gaiety and gallantry, nothing of which distinguishes our noble, placid, venerable friend. Whilst I was examining the Duke, I am hardly yet sensible of what my feelings were at that moment; I could not hate him, because in his face and person I traced so strong a likeness to the Count Aluredus; neither could I look on him without a sort of horror, when I considered

him the cause of the Count's sorrows, which by participation, I may say, were partly become my own. The Marquis Pierpoint observed where my attention was fixed; and half serious, half jesting, desired he might have the honour of presenting the Duke to me, adding, that however fickle he might be, one single view of my charms would settle him at once. In England, and as a wife, I should have resented a freedom like this, but here custom not only makes such freedoms pardonable, but also a test of the most accomplished character. To conceal my real thoughts about the Duke, and to shew that I was not unacquainted with the French politesse, I told the Marquis smiling, that greatly as he flattered my vanity, I had no ambition to hold in chains a slave whose age flay-  
ing

ing a particular emphasis on the last word) informed me it was high time he should enjoy unmolested freedom. My smiles covered the satire I intended to convey; they hid it so effectually, that the Marquis, who has been a general admirer at least these fifty years, perceived not it was directed to himself, or if he did perceive it, he took care I should not enjoy the fruits of my victory. My meditation scheme being thus at an end, and having no desire to be further entertained by the fine speeches of my superannuated beau, who the day after I came to this place declared himself my Cicisbeo, I gave him my hand without reluctance on his offering to lead me to the ball-room. The company, before crouded, were much increased—in-  
B 4                      creased

creased to such a degree that the heat was almost suffocating.

It was now I was to be surprized with an object more unexpected than the Duke, whose arrival at Montpellier had made his presence probable. I was prepared for seeing him, but I was not prepared for seeing him walk up and down the room with one arm rested on the shoulder of Lord Bromsgrove. I was more than surprized, I was astonished.—I looked again, and saw I was not mistaken. The striking figure of Lord Bromsgrove, the nobleness of his air, the graceful mixture of dignity and sweetness expressed in his countenance, attracted the general notice of a numerous circle. Every eye followed him, filled with that kind of sentiment which

which the heart sends out when transported with admiration. A thousand whispers caught my ear, of which he alone was the subject, and which, had they reached his, though I by no means stile him a vain man, might have turned his head giddy with applauses. He appeared deeply engaged in conversation with the Duke, whilst I felt myself strangely fluttered by a rencounter so perfectly unlooked for, and thought of Alicia. I saw Sir William at a distance ; I went up to him and acquainted him, that the person walking with the Duke de Deni was Lord Bromsgrove. His Lordship having proposed a near connection with our family (though the methods he took to accomplish it were not exactly conformable to prudence) could not be



called dishonourable ;—if a fault, surely the greatness of his behaviour after that unlucky affair entitled him to an unreserved—I will add, an affectionate reception. I rejoiced at the opportunity chance had thus thrown in my way to convince him we were not insensible to the generosity he manifested on a late occasion. There are many modes of discovering our approbation, without descending to particulars : events that are not to be recalled, one should determine to avoid speaking of with the strictest caution. Sir William was no sooner informed of my inclinations, than with his usual goodness he expressed his approbation, and would immediately have presented himself to Lord Bromsgrove, but having never seen him till then, he applied  
to

to the Master of the Ceremonies, by whom he was introduced.

The Duke was at this time seated by a beautiful girl, Mademoiselle Longville, who engaged him so effectually that we escaped his notice. I really think Alicia herself, had this accidental meeting happened to her instead of me could not have felt more embarrassed than I did, when Sir William led up Lord Bromsgrove ; when I rose to receive him I actually trembled—he was not unaffected—my own confusion was not more visible than his. I said I trembled—it was for Lady Mortington I was agitated—Good God ! what a difference between this man, whose wife she might have been, and the man whose wife she is ; —the comparison is too obvious.

Were Alicia more susceptible, I should be in terrors for her happiness ; but that indifference which marks her character will, I hope, keep her from the precipice of reflection. Many civilities passed between Sir William and Lord Bromsgrove ; amongst the number his Lordship paid me, the kindest enquiries for your health, and that of my father, were not omitted. —Not at this time one word of Lady Mortington. He desired we would permit him to pay his respects to us the next morning, and accepted with pleasure Sir William's invitation to breakfast. His appointment he kept with exactness ; and when he went away, he left us both equally charmed with the many excellent qualities he is possessed of. I have been much affected—I have even shed tears. The  
first

first time I saw him, our conversation, for he scarcely left us the whole evening, was on general subjects ; but the following morning it became more particular. I had determined to avoid those particulars—it was impossible—they were not to be avoided. I will not distress you, my dear mother, by repeating what passed—I will only say, Lord Bromsgrove is entitled to our love—to our respect—to our gratitude—that he is the most honourable of men. He has laid his heart open to our view ; it has been filled with the liveliest, the sincerest passion ; but as the wife of another, you have nothing to apprehend from his former attachment. Lady Mortington's situation considered, and the easy morals of a fashionable world, I own I had fears—those fears are now at an end, they can  
no

no longer exist, after the knowledge I have acquired of Lord Bromsgrove's principles. Should accident bring them together, should he see her every day on his return to England, he might see her with safety—he is too good—too generous—to make her the object of an unworthy pursuit. When he mentioned her name, though it was in an accent of tenderness that wrung my heart, I could discover she had lost the influence she once maintained over his affections. Sir William is enchanted with him ; he declares he is the first of human beings, and I believe, for the time we are all here, they will be inseparable. Lord Bromsgrove is of the Duke de Deni's party, and lodges in the same house. He desires to introduce the Duke to our acquaintance ; we shall not receive that honour  
as :

as any acquisition to our happiness, neither could we gracefully refuse what his Lordship condescended to ask as a particular proof of our regard to himself. As the friend of Lord Bromsgrove, I could give him a sincere welcome, but the enemy of our dear Count's repose, I shall not feel myself easy in his presence.—A cold civility is the most I can afford the Duke ; my esteem is all engaged to his brother.

And now, my beloved mother, having lately scribbled so much, unless I should encounter another adventure as extraordinary as my meeting Lord Bromsgrove, I bid you adieu at least for a fortnight.

LETTER

## LETTER XL

*Lady Mortington to Lady Alice  
Sinclear.*

Mortington-Castle.

OH, Lady Alice!—Lady Alice! to what a mortifying condition am I reduced! it is absolutely not to be borne. I could tear the wretch's eyes out who informed Lord Mortington—I could weep out my own with vexation. What will all this avail—what will become of me, if I do not exert myself to a better purpose than weeping.

ing and wailing. What will become of me, I say?—disappointed in all those delightful views, to purchase which, I relinquished—you know what I relinquished. What will become of me—my shape spoilt—my fate inevitable. Perhaps, after all, I must give up my very life to satiate the cruelty of a husband, to whom I have already sacrificed every thing but that one last poor stake. Heaven give me patience! if I can neither intimidate or soften him, if he will not relax the severity of his resolutions, what will become of me? I will die rather than submit to his provoking obstinate humour. I suppose his mother, his grandmother, and all the antiques of his ugly family, have contentedly and tamely carried on the breed at Mortington Castle. I am neither contented or tame, I shall  
not



every soul who enters the door is whispered into confidence, and your victim friend a thousand times in a day overwhelmed with confusion. In short, I am sick—sick to death of matrimony and its disgusting consequences. Now to my tale;—but I will defer it till I am a little more composed.

#### CONTINUATION.

Well, then—on my return to rural felicity, or Mortington Castle, (which you please, Lady Alice) from a tedious visit to Lord and Lady K——d,—a visit in which dull ceremony (a constant resident in that foolish family) presided at the table—followed us in our walks—in our rides—haunted us in our most retired moments—and used all her ingenious arts to tease and torment me—

I suffered.

I suffered more than martyrdom! On my return, I say, I found myself decomposed, out of humour; in short, full of complicated grievances. I was, besides, heated with my journey, on which my unlucky Lord, I shall never forgive him for it, blundered on the idea of calling in a pale-faced son of Esculapius. He came, attended by a terrible executioner, with frightful instruments, to draw blood from an arm that may vie with your own for whiteness. I knew my situation, but had no notion that these prying people could discover it, and submitted patiently to the operator. Alas! I was doomed to undergo the dreadful shocks of having my secret betrayed—of Lord Mortington's disagreeable transports, and, what was a million times more insupportable, his cruel resolves that I should not venture

venture from the Castle till I had presented him a treasure which would crown the rest of his days with felicity. Very pretty nonsense!—a blessed sentence for a wife whose enjoyments are centered in the world,—who scorns to be enslaved in a stupid domestic circle. I have opposed the forces of my inclination against his determination, and a very warm engagement ensued. The fear that the darling object of his hopes may sustain any damage in the combat, made him observe some degree of moderation; I was restrained by no such feeble considerations, I exhausted my whole stock of resentment. Provoking!—I exhausted it all to no purpose—he tried to lessen my agitation—he endeavoured to stop my upbraidings—he wiped away my tears—but would not be conquered

quered by them. I think I have found out his weak side ;—I will attack him in that quarter ;—I will attack him in such a manner as he shall not be able to withstand. After all, should I fail of succeeding, should his heart be as hard as his countenance—should I fail—distraction is in the thought ! You must come to me, Lady Alice,—you must come and close the eyes of your wretched Alicia—I shall never survive the disappointment, that's certain. Observe, my dear, I do not bid you prepare for a journey to this detestable Castle, I have only provided against the worst that can possibly happen. I am low-spirited—very low-spirited just now, but I do not always see my prospects through the obscure of despondency ; affairs may be yet arranged more agreeably to my wishes. If Lord Mortington

Mortington has one spark of human nature about him, if he is not altogether diabolical, I shall yet find an expedient to embrace you in town before six weeks are at an end. You may soon expect to receive a Gazette extraordinary, informing you of my having gained a complete victory ;—publish it at Cornelly's—at Almack's—and, oh ! publish it at the enchanting Opera ;—procure once more for her constant votary a place in the luxurious bosom of pleasure. My wings will be clipped ; I cannot fly to such heights as formerly, but I will take care the burden I unfortunately carry about me shall incommode me as little as possible. Do any of our friends confine themselves on such ridiculous occasions, and shall I yield to any of them in an act of heroism ? No, no,—I shall go out even  
to

to the last day ; so that matter is settled.

When I have thoroughly tuned my Lord, I hope to meet with no further obstructions on his part ; or, if he should dare assert any authority to restrain me in my innocent amusements, I shall treat it with the same contempt I do his other absurdities. These sentiments it will be necessary to keep to myself till I get to town, when he and your Ladyship shall find me the mistress of my own hours. I have no apprehension that he will drag me back to my prison before I have conferred on him the honourable title of a father ; it must be confessed, twenty years ago, that title would have sat more gracefully upon him at present another appellation would suit him better. I shall

make the best of it now, and endeavour to form him to my own model. The materials I have to work on are worse than indifferent, so that if I can but mould him into tolerable obedience, my glory will be the greater. Had he been broke to my hands, I should have had less trouble ; but then my skill and genius, for want of being called out, would have passed away unnoticed, unadmired ; whereas, I intend they shall shine out a bright example to future ages.

Here I drop the subject, and shall not take it up again till I have reduced my theory into practice.

#### CONTINUATION.

That Olivia, of whom I have said a great deal, is undoubtedly a most complete

plete mistress in the art of fascination ; even I have not escaped her magical influence. I am almost ashamed to confess the meanness to which my partiality had nearly reduced me—more than once I have actually been inclined to repose unlimited confidence in this outcast of fortune. Nothing but the assiduity with which she avoids the honour I intended her, could have saved me from a condescension so imprudent—so degrading. I imagined her influence with Lord Mortington might be serviceable in quelling his rebellious humour, but she would not interfere in our dispute—she modestly withdrew, and left us in the midst of our contest. She is, altogether, a strange composition—she will not speak herself, or give me an opportunity of speaking to her on the subject of my difficulties, yet



she is by no means inattentive to whatever she thinks can give me pleasure. Observing my spirits are depressed with unusual sadness, she exerts all the natural vivacity of her disposition to raise me from dejection. She plays and sings divinely, which I never discovered, till, amongst other modes to entertain me, she revealed her knowledge in that delightful science, to which you know I am entirely devoted. Olivia eclipses me in execution as well as voice; nor am I much mortified at the advantage she has over me, because it is not myself only, but the whole world she excels. Don't be angry, Lady Alice, I really begin to think this little obscure girl will become of consequence to my amusement at such times as I am to be immured in the vile country. If I love her, it will be for  
my

my own convenience ; she is not in that station which can give you a rival in my friendship ; were she capable of assuming on my favour, I would certainly punish her presumption. She contrives to unite, to a certain grace and dignity which otherwise would be insupportable, so much sweetness—so much humility—that I have no occasion to remind her that she is dependent on my bounty ; I am convinced she will not grow impertinent on the indulgence I have lately shewn her, and I find myself strongly inclined to continue to her my good humour. My good humour—but if my Lord goes on at this prodigious rate—if I cannot bring him to order—I shall positively have no good humour left.

Olivia, I am apt to believe, is romantic; wherever she has scraped it together, she has an infinity of politeness, yet, now and then, a sentiment one never meets with in fashionable circles escapes her in conversation—romantic, certainly. She is not troublesome neither, as these sort of people generally are; I should hate her, if, vain of her own opinions, she was eternally forcing them on her hearers. A pedantic woman, like her Grace of B——, is detestable; how much less to be borne with are such obsolete sentences of morals and stuff coming from the mouth of a Plebeian. What Olivia advances never displeases me; she appears rather to court your approbation, than command your applause, and never tires out one's patience, or wears her  
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own subjects thread-bare. She has given me a taste for reading, by being a perfect mistress of that accomplishment in all modern languages. I shall cultivate this new-acquired passion ;—books were once my aversion, but I have many reasons for endeavouring to like them in my present situation. Take one of the many :—If my Lord is ill-humoured or disagreeable, I shall fly to my sanctum sanctorum, sacred from all molestation.—Many a tedious hour have I been obliged to drag away in matrimonial conference, because in the morning or after dinner, when I have offered to retire, he has told me, as I neither worked or read, he would not let me sit alone ; and if I acted in opposition, and did not return immediately, I was sure in ten minutes to receive a mes-

sage requesting my company, or to hear him tap at the door of my dressing-room. Is not this single reason a sufficient excuse for the reformation I am about to undergo. Do not disturb yourself, it will last no longer than my captivity. I intend to sort my ideas and employments—one set I carry with me to town, the other I leave in the country, to use them alternately, as occasion requires.—To you I come refined and polished ; my rust and rubbish I leave behind me. Heigh-ho ! I wish I had made my last effort for liberty—I fear it will be a hard struggle.—Man is the most obstinate of all obstinate creatures.

Adieu—adieu, dear Lady Alice, pray that your poor friend may come off victorious.

LETTER

## LETTER XII.

*Olivia to Mrs. Selwyn.*

Mortington Castle.

**P**ERMITTED to write to my benefactress, honoured with her gracious command to throw aside all reserve, to forget the distance fortune has placed between us, and to consider myself as the child of her affections. These are flattering distinctions to an unfortunate young woman, who has no merit to claim, no power to return, such tender—such indulgent obligations.

I am poor, Madam, in every thing but a grateful heart, that is the gift of Heaven; as such you will not despise its humble offerings. When I lost my mother, and one other friend, the only friend but her I ever knew, the friend of my infant years, to whose humanity I owe every little advantage that raises me above the illiterate; when this dear—dear friend, this benevolent protector, died, bitter was my portion—incessant were my tears of affliction. I was a stranger to pride—I could return to my original nothing without murmuring; but oh, Madam! when I considered that in one grave were deposited father—brother—every dear relation—every kind friend—my fortitude forsook me—I was in despair; but religion forbade my attempting any thing against a life which I held by suffrage of  
of

of its omnipotent founder. I fear this was not enough; the impatience I betrayed was criminal—I still wanted resignation, and the prayers I offered up in the agonies of my soul for a speedy dissolution of my sorrows, added to my guilt. It was not for a wretch like me to dictate to the supreme disposer of all events.—I prayed, but my petitions were rejected, and I was made sensible of his heavy displeasure. Difficulties surrounded me on all sides—it was my fate to struggle against powers—against principalities. I saw my crime, and was penitent; my penitence was sincere, it was mercifully accepted;—I escaped the snare laid for my destruction; and, under the guidance of a good providence, I hid my orphan head beneath the humble roof of poverty. Heaven approved the sacrifice I made



to preserve unsullied the purity—the innocence—with which we are all sent out from the gracious hand of our Maker. Sheltered in this lowly shed, I became once more acquainted with content;—happiness was buried in the tomb of my revered protector, and I courted her meek-eyed sister to supply the vacancy in my heart. I had engaged this sweet companion; Content was all my own, when your amiable daughter discovered my retreat; but Lady Nelson's condescending gentleness made me eagerly embrace her offer of attending you in England. Your being her mother was a sufficient security for the usage I was to hope for—my ambitious views did not aspire to respect—civility bounded my expectations. I conceived you would also have the humanity to overlook any omission

omission or awkwardness I might betray in a station for which my only fear was I should not be found properly qualified. Gracious Heaven! I am utterly confused when I reflect how very—very far your goodness has exceeded the picture I had in my own imagination faintly sketched of your excellencies—faintly indeed! Instead of servitude, I am supported in affluence; and where I hoped only for a kind mistress, I have found a patroness, who bestows on me the exalted title of her daughter—who calls me the child of her affection. Oh, my honoured, my dear Mrs. Selwin! how these honours oppress me. You have commanded me to be free, you will therefore pardon my freedom—Yes, Madam, I will presume to tell you a soul, the kindred of your own, once inhabited the breast

passed at the feet of my dear, kind patroness; that my constant hourly endeavours to promote her happiness may speak my veneration, and in some degree testify my gratitude. Next to the most desirable of all stations (being near your person) is that in which you have placed me. I have experienced great civilities—great kindnesses, from Lord and Lady Mortington; I am often ashamed at the deference with which I am treated by them. I am pleased—I am charmed—but my vanity is not raised by their flattering distinctions—these distinctions do not proceed from any merit I possess;—to you, Madam, I owe them—it is your protection, your recommendation, that has procured them for me.

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The present situation of Lady Mortington has transported her Lord with immoderate joy, I never saw a man so happy;—I trust in Heaven this event some time hence will be the blessed means of establishing her Ladyship's felicity. I believe she wishes much to go to town this winter; I hope she will be indulged in her inclinations—yet I fear it too. She told me this day that Lord Mortington was averse to her undertaking so long a journey—that she intended applying to Mr. Selwin and yourself, and hoped every thing from your intercession.—For God's sake! let me intreat, you will not withhold your mediation.—Comply, I beseech you with her Ladyship's request, and pardon the liberty I have taken. Your daughter, my dear Madam, has a remarkable

markable sweetness of disposition—she has a thousand other excellencies—but I have some reasons, reasons suggested by observation, which must excuse the warmth of my solicitations. Would Lady Mortington be contented to continue in the country, her Lord himself could not rejoice at her condescension more than I should do; but to force her inclinations would grieve me. I see plainly a constraint of this nature would be attended with many disagreeable consequences. I am now confined to hints—when I have the happiness of throwing myself at your feet I will be more explicit. My honoured, my beloved,—shall I presume on the indulgence you have granted me, and add mother to the endearing epithets? Yes; I will call you my beloved mother;—the person who once stood in  
that

that dear light was not more my parent, nor did I ever return her affection with greater ardour. Take me then to your maternal bosom—suffer me to repose there every thought of my grateful heart—command me to disclose every event of a life which, young as I am, has been strangely checquered with the vicissitudes of fortune. Command me to do this, and I will shew my obedience, either by my pen, or in deferring my recital till I can give it you in person. Should you be inclined to honour your poor girl with this new mark of favour, I shall still encroach—still ask for another to be added to it. Allow me, if possible, to speak rather than to write of my sorrow.—a moment's reflection has told me how much your presence will support me in the sad relation. I shall, besides, have  
this.

this advantage, I shall watch every turn of your expressive countenance, to discover, consequently to correct, the faults I may have committed; and where I have acted right you will reward me with a smile of approbation. God Almighty bless, protect, and guard the benevolent possessors of Selwin Cottage, whose hands I kiss with respect, duty, gratitude, and affection!

LETTER

## LETTER XIII.

*Lady Alice Sinclear to Lady Ann  
Mortington.*

Cavendish-Square.

**B**EFORE this reaches your Ladyship, the intelligence of Lord Derwent's death must have arrived at Mortington Castle. Did not your heart go pit-a-pat, my dear? Well, I suppose by this time you have shed all your tears on the melancholy occasion. As you have managed your matters, I send you my compliments of condolence. Congratulations.




gratulation would have been a delightful expression ;—had you consulted me, and followed the advice I should have given you, I might have sent you the latter. Condolence ! it has a most tragical sound ; but you must take it now, I can think of no substitute. Well, then, I send you my compliments of condolence. Indeed—indeed, you was wrong—very wrong, to be in such immoderate haste ; why not wait a little ? You have purchased honours and titles at an exorbitant price, when, if you had waited a little, these honours, these titles, would have come to you in rotation. It is absurd, I confess, to reflect, now all is over ; but the mistake was so great, I cannot help it. My reflections, you know, must proceed from friendship—I had always a violent friendship for my dear Alicia. I  
never

never much approved your reasons for marrying your antique Lord ; the sudden death of Lord Derwent convinces me of their entire fallacy. It cannot be recalled, you say ;—true, it cannot be recalled—the harder your fate ;—but it is monstrously provoking. To have been the wife of such a Phoenix as Bromsgrove—Lord, child ! you was certainly possessed. He loved you—he offered to marry you, even in the presence of his haughty mother—you had no reason to doubt his fidelity. Was I Lady Mortington, I should tear my eyes out—I should go down-right mad. I will not upbraid you ; the best must be made of a bad matter. As Countess of Derwent, you would infallibly have been the envy of all the women about town. Excuse me, Alicia, but I love you so entirely, that whenever  
I think

I think of your blindness, it puts me in a passion—but when I think of your wigged Lord—I always detested a wig—the idea is so ridiculous, that—but I won't tell you what—it does not signify. Every man has not the beautiful hair of a Bromsgrove ; but any hair is better than a wig—for Heaven's sake don't bring him up such a fright to town ; black or grey, let his hair grow out, I beseech you. Bromsgrove is expected soon from France, to take his place in the house, and possession of a princely fortune. We are none of us disposed to treat the most charming man in the world with cruelty ; he is too handsome—too rich—too accomplished—to sue in vain for a wife. How happy that fortunate female who is destined to fill the place you, but for an error in judgment, might have occupied.

occupied. You imagined all men were fickle—I was then, and am still of a different opinion—you quoted as an instance of their inconstancy, it was an age ago, but I perfectly remember it—you quoted the Marquis of Plaidstow. It is reserved for me to drive away the unaccountable mist which has hitherto, in more respects than one, obscured your senses. Know then, the report of his having forsaken Bab Hastings, like a thousand other reports, is a mere jest, entirely without foundation. So far from having forsaken her, she has privately been his wife these seven years, and is come out as Duchess of Milford, with a brood of three infants. Their marriage was declared but yesterday; for what reason the declaration has been so long delayed after the obstruction

was




was removed, I have not been able to discover.

And so, my dear, your tyrant wants to confine you the whole winter to his odious castle—and your shape is spoilt. I pity you sincerely ; but were I his wife, I would submit first to a mad-house, and straight waistcoat. If you give up this point you are undone for ever—you see I cannot help giving my advice, though sometimes it has come too late, and sometimes it has been neglected. The moment I hear your London journey is put off, I shall cry out, alas, poor Alicia ! thou art cut off in the flower of thy youth—Alas, poor Alicia ! I see no difference, whether our persons are buried below or above the earth—obscurity is the grave of our bodies dead or living.

You please me infinitely by declaring the resolution you will exert ; you may be assured of my best wishes, and and when I pray, it shall be for your success. I am called away, not to [contemplate a speck in the sun, but to receive a Star and Garter.

## CONTINUATION.

The Duke of D——, he is married—I dispatched him in a moment ; and now I am returned to settle a certain affair with your Ladyship. I am quite mortified that you should humble yourself, waste your time and paper, on a subject so perfectly insignificant as the little Olivia, of whom you seem so immoderately fond. For my part, I let my servants and dependants, if they have good qualities, exhibit them to each other. It is neither your or my employ,



employ, to find out perfections in those poor animals who depend on us for the bread they eat.—Should my favourite woman, who has lived with me since I was as high as my pen—should she presume to bore me with accomplishments which are not fitting her station, I would discard her without hesitation—nothing shall screen her from my vengeance. Beware, my dear, of the arts laid to ensnare your confidence—I really blush for the weakness you was going to commit—You don't know the cunning these low bodies are capable of. Once more I charge you on my most perfect friendship—I charge you—keep at an humble distance this encroaching young woman. Take my word for it, my sweet Alicia, this Olivia is the spy of your mighty wise—mighty prudent father and mo-

ther; perhaps too, the creature of Lord Mortington—it is more than probable. Your interest, as I apprehend it, is separate from your husband's; how then can your favourite be faithful to both? Have you no snug chaplain—no spruce steward—no hanger-on, like herself—who, from views of interest, would take her off your hands? Fie, fie, Lady Mortington! you have not half the cleverness I expected from your address and education. Had the affair been mine, I would have managed it in some such manner long ago, though I never troubled you with my opinion till I saw you almost overcome by the vile spells of your enchantress. I beg you will not bring your Plebeian phenomenon with you to town; I may be obliged to see her sometimes in your apartment, and  
such



such odd mixtures are horridly disagreeable. You have not, surely, so soon forgot, that it is the etiquette of politeness to assort one's company with propriety. I should really be puzzled what kind of behaviour to put on, were you, in the flights of your romantic attachment to introduce to me this waiting gentlewoman—this toad-eater—or whatever else you please to call her, in the character of your friend. Spare me the mortification of such a trial. If you cannot dispose of her otherwise, keep her in the country to mend your laces, fold your gowns, and feed your poultry. I call every day on Brilliant; if one do not worry those dirty trades-people from morning to night, we have no chance of getting any thing out of their clutches, they will everlastingly tire out our patience;

I visit him so often, that he now goes on very well, and has displayed excellent taste in the disposition of your jewels ; they look at least ten thousand pounds the better for passing through his hands. You have now nothing more to do but these few odd matters—make your grand attack—come off victorious—pack up your bundle of a Lord in the corner of your coach—borrow his phaeton—get the handsomest Chevalier that visits at the Castle to drive you, and bowl away for London, where you will find every thing in my department ready for your reception. I went this morning to my milliner, in St. James's-street, and found the good woman, with all her nimble-fingered damsels, so amazingly busy—looks so brim full of importance, that I enquired what might be the meaning

meaning of this extraordinary bustle, and was told they were preparing mourning for the Dowager Countess of Derwent. So the disconsolate widow has already wished her Lord a good repose, and is stepping into her weeds, I dare say, with the same careless ease that she would change her morning dishabille for the ornaments of full dress ! I judge her feelings from what my own would be on a similar occasion—even in the life we live, were it not for those family revolutions we should find it intolerably stupid. Lady Derwent is neither young nor handsome, but she has spirit, and when the achievement is blazoned over her door, she will be half way on the road to another husband. There are bets this moment depending at White's, to the amount of twenty thousand pounds,

that she does not languish in widowhood six months from the very day her good-natured Lord presented her with her freedom. Lord Robert Pinkny was my informer—it seems he is five thousand deep in the bet; and rather than lose it, he swears he will marry her himself;—she is rich—he is poor—she is old—he is young,—so much the better, the greater his chance of succeeding. I verily believe he will seriously attempt this conquest—he speaks of it now in jest, to try how the world will take it in earnest. It would be a pity to laugh him out of his ridiculous scheme—it will be time enough to turn him into ridicule, after he has disposed of his highly-perfumed person to the best advantage. He has made me partly his confidante, and it shall not be my fault if your Ladyship has not  
a sweet

a sweet avenger who will amply repay the Dowager all those insults she has made you suffer. A young handsome miser, (Lord Robert does not abound in generosity more than in fortune) who sells himself to a rich ugly old woman, will not allow her to live the most comfortable life in the world, and it is with this idea that I am about to provide for Lady Derwent. I shall be one amongst the first to carry her my compliments of condolence. Here condolence is another word for congratulation: when I applied it to you, I could not give it this meaning. I am a vast favourite; and if I find an opportunity in my second, third, or fourth visit, to slide in a word edge-ways, in favour of the intended, he shall not be forgotten. I do not design to have any hand in proposing him—Lord Robert Pinkny is

the prettiest young man of fashion about town ;—he is a great admirer of your Ladyship ; I saw him this morning—he is afflicted lest your health may suffer from retirement !—These, or any other flying hints to the same purpose seasonably applied, may occasion her some agreeable reveries, when she comes to consult her pillow. In short :—But I shall proceed no farther in my plan at this time ;—a violent rapping at the door proclaims the approach of visitors ; I am to be overwhelmed with company this evening, they begin to pour in already, and have disarranged all my ideas.—Farewell, my pretty Countess ; pray forget not the advice I have given you, and attribute the unreserved freedom of my pen to the warmth of that friendship for which we are distinguished. Positively you must not bring Olivia to town.

LETTER

## LETTER XIV.

*Lady Mortington to Lady Alice Sinclear.*

Mortington Castle.

I HARDLY know whether to be most pleased or angry at the contents of your Ladyship's last favour; but this I know, that the flippancy of your wit would have charmed me more on a less indifferent subject than that on which you have taken pains to exercise it. If I have betrayed an error in judgment, am I the first of my sex that ever fell under the same predicament? You say you are my friend,—I believe—I  
D know

know you are! but is it the office of a friend to glare our faults before our eyes, when we turn our heads aside to avoid them? For an error in judgment, I give you back an error in friendship. I am married, and you might have spared yourself the trouble, Lady Alice, of forging additional weights to the heavy chain I am obliged to drag after me. Though your Ladyship is pleased to reproach me without mercy, I shall not plead guilty to your charge; I have by no means deserved your satire—I am perfectly satisfied with my own conduct. I am just now in high good-humour with my *care sposa*; were I to choose again, notwithstanding his wig, I would prefer him to—let me see—why, I would prefer him to the forlorn state of a spinster. You must be sensible,



sible, Lady Alice, that men of rank and fashion are not easily made husbands in our time—I am much obliged to Lord Mortington for the preference he gave me, and am monstrously contented with the title of Countess. Matrimony must always carry a clog with it—why not as easy with Lord Mortington as another? Does this look like mortification? Does this look like repentance? Blush—blush for shame, my dear, at the injustice you did me, in supposing Lord Derwent's sudden exit would humble me to the pitiable condition of a penitent. Was I to build castles in the air?—Was I to expect a miracle would be worked in my favour?—Lord Derwent was but twenty-five years older than his son; what reason then to hope, in compliance to my convenience, he would retire

tire so much before his time? You may laugh if you please; I have shed many tears for his loss; he was a good man. I could not have wished his death, indeed I could not, though my happiness had depended on that event, supposing I could have entertained a sentiment so contrary to my nature—supposing I had married his son—I would lay my life that his would have been prolonged a dozen years at least—it never happens otherwise—wayward fate delights in crossing our purposes. I really begin to like Lord Mortington very well; but if I did not, on no consideration would I offer up a petition for the charming liberty of widowhood—it would be better policy to pray for his life; in that case I should expect a contrary effect. You may perceive Lady Alice, I am in amazing spirits,—  
I shall

I shall say a thousand mad things before I have done. So you tell me Bromsgrove is soon expected in town—Very well—let him come, I have no objection to meeting him if he does not presume to give himself airs, because I did not choose to be the slave of his foolish projects. Should he take it in his head to shew the smallest resentment, I have no longer any terms to keep with him. Love is a chimera I have been but little acquainted with—I am neither a prude, nor so unfashionable as to frown at innocent freedoms, which may alarm the vulgar, whose narrow judgment can draw no line between liveliness and vice. My sentiments are not confined by such illiterate prejudices; but I would rather die than relinquish my pretensions to real virtue, or to real modesty.

I am

I am the wife of Lord Mortington—I know the dignity which belongs to that character; neither he nor the world shall have any thing to accuse me of on the score of capital indiscretions; I will deserve their approbation; whether I enjoy it or not must depend on their own liberal or illiberal ideas. I hate unmeaning forms, and shall not disturb myself to observe them; the consequence this humour may produce may be regarded by me as mere matter of moon-shine. I have been monstrously ill, Lady Alice; by the by, a very necessary illness—had my wise Lord persisted in his whims, he would certainly have overturned all his mighty views of heirship. What woman, disappointed as I was, could have submitted to make him a father at the expence of all her better prospects. It was

was well he relaxed when he did, or he would have smarted for his obstinacy. Lye-in in the country!—be confined to a sick chamber in the country!—it was a shocking idea, I should have expired under it. Tears and sighs were at first my only artillery—tears and sighs would not do—the frowns—the perverse frowns of the person they were directed against, reported their ill success. I was now obliged to call in the assistance of sullen silence—profound melancholy—hysteric fits—with their whole train of consequences—these were opposed to as little purpose as the former. Rest and appetite next forsook me, I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep. My Lord was alarmed, his angry countenance began to soften—what was to become of his heir?—The symptoms of apprehension he betrayed

trayed strengthened my hopes. A physician was sent for—when he arrived, by good luck, my Lord had walked out: this was a fine opportunity for me to speak to him alone—just what I wanted—I made a proper use of the precious moment, and engaged him in my interest. This important business was but just accomplished, when my rip-roaring Lord came creeping to my bedside. As he approached, I graciously held out my lilly hand—I looked wistfully on his face with a mildness you must have admired. I seemed to say, SAY my dear Lord, to what a condition I am reduced by your cruelty—my eyes ached, but I can forgive. This part of the farce admirably performed, he was actually as much softened by my goodness, as if I had expressed it in words; and, kissing my hand with becoming:

becoming eagerness, resigned it to the Doctor. The Doctor felt my pulse—hemmed thrice—shook his head—and retired, beckoning my Lord as he went out. Deary was a million times more terrified than the languishing patient. I knew my disorder was at that crisis which would bring it to a speedy conclusion, whilst his Lordship obeyed the solemn summons with such a profundity of concern, which he simpered and wriggled to conceal from my notice; the moment his back was turned, I laughed heartily at my own ingenuity, and his groundless fears. The interesting conference lasted more than ten minutes; but all that I suffered from suspense in that interval was amply recompenced—By what? Why, by the re-entrance of Lord Mortington, as messenger of those tidings which  
were

were to recall me from death to life: what other recompence could I possibly mean? In short, I am left to follow my inclinations—my inclinations, you may be assured, will lead me fast towards you, even before the time first fixed on for that transporting journey! In ten days your Ladyship may expect me—orders are already dispatched to get every thing ready in South-Audley Street. I am now going to air with my Lord—I am all smiles—all complacency—upon my word he is vastly improved.

## CONTINUATION.

Such an airing!—What will become of me, if I should fall in love with my own husband?—He is the civillest creature breathing. A thousand pounds—  
it



it was a very pretty present, and very prettily presented. I am quite well now—I am obliged to your Ladyship—I have spared you the trouble of enquiring. I more and more admire my charming little innocent stratagem; it has set us on so amicable a footing, that it is my dear Lord, my lovely Alicia, at every word. Do not misapprehend me; I intend all these absurdities shall be left behind us. I know the impropriety of bringing them into the world. I have a thousand charges in a day, to consider my situation—not to make too free with my constitution—to keep early hours—go but seldom into public, and such ridiculous nonsense. The thousand pounds were opportunely administered—could I do less than promise?—Promises cost nothing, therefore I shall  
continue

continue to give them freely, till I am absolutely in my own power. By the rules of polite custom, we are not constrained to fulfil all our silly engagements, or I might not have been so profuse. I am vastly entertained with your scheme for the Dowager; but if Lord Robert is the man you describe him, don't carry it farther than imagination. Though I wish to mortify Lady Derwent for her late ill usage, and will stick at no means to make her punishment in that way as severe as possible; yet she was once much more my friend than my enemy; for that reason I cannot consent she shall be tormented for life, or receive the reward of her pride by any other mode than that with which fortune has so amply provided me.

I shall

I shall positively bring Olivia to town.—I beg your pardon, but I have now no inclination to leave her behind;—suppose I had, my Lord would not be pleased; I shall certainly humour him in trifles, to make him passive in essentials. I will take care she shall not offend your Ladyship by her presence; I think I can answer for her, it is an honour to which she will not aspire. Don't be angry if I tell you that I love her—that she is a good creature—and that you have mistaken her character. Let us enjoy our different opinions without permitting a contest so immaterial to disturb our friendship, or engage our further attention. You give me to understand, that none of you are disposed to treat with cruelty my willowed lover;—pray, do you intend by saying none, to include with yourself

self the long train of gaping spinsters that make a part of your assemblies? Or, do you propose him for the snug party? Lord Bromsgrove is highly favoured, I must confess; but perhaps this distinction may not be so very necessary as some imagine to his happiness. Don't you conceive, my dear, that some people's abundant kindnesses may be absolute cruelties? I sincerely wish the party success, and shall feel a deal of compassion for you all, if he should baulk your expectations; but from the knowledge I have acquired of his taste—of his heart—of his disposition—I shake my head with physical importance, and cannot flatter you.

You find, my dear Lady Alice, I have not taken umbrage at your freedoms.

doms, as you whimsically call them ; my pen retaliates with the same unreserve of friendship. I hope to assure you in person that my friendship for your Ladyship is as fervent and lasting, as your's for me is violent and conspicuous.

## LETTER XV.

*Mrs. Selwin to Olivia.*

Selwin Cottage.

**I** WRITE to you, my dear, on a subject that engrosses all my thoughts—that mixes itself in all my ideas, on which depends the felicity or infelicity of my future days. The repose of my life hangs on the conduct of my daughters;—the prudence of your friend Lady Nelson has been very distinguished; every action of hers has added


ded a lustre to her character. Would I could say my poor unthinking Alicia's was equally established. It is for Alicia I am alarmed—it is for her steadiness in the perseverance of virtue, for which I tremble. You are unacquainted with a mother's feelings—a mother's tender anxieties—or you would fully enter into my distresses. Years have not yet brought you acquainted with experience; but you have understanding—you have discretion—above many who can number twice your days. It is to that understanding, to that discretion, I apply; I also apply to that duty—that affection, you profess for me. By this application I mean to engage your strictest attention to one particular point, which may probably save from dishonour a family, of whom you must now look

upon yourself as become a part. When I sacrificed my own inclinations in giving you up to Lady Mortington, it was done with a view, that by example she might acquire some of those steady refinements, which, from my earliest knowledge of your mind and disposition, endeared you to me. Whether the awe which children are too apt to think attends the title of parent—whether the distance time had placed between us—or from what other consideration, I know not, but my mildest, gentlest precepts have been lost on Alicia; nor have her father's more forcible remonstrances been received with greater condescension. In a person of her own sex—her own age—we hoped to find a successful substitute, from whom she would learn some of those plain truths we found it so difficult



cult to inculcate. There was no superiority on your side to prevent her loving you with fondness ; nor could we suppose she would shut her eyes to merit so conspicuous. We thought she would rejoice at our appointing her a friend so worthy of her confidence—a friend with whom she might have consulted on all occasions, free from reserve—a friend, by whose conduct we hoped she would regulate her own, and in whose conversation she might have found a continual source of entertainment ;—all this we fondly imagined. I dreaded her returning to London, at least with such inordinate desires for pleasure as she unhappily acquired by her former residence in that dangerous capital, whose dissipated manners are destructive to natural affection—to the nation in general—to the peace of families

families in particular. From the advantage of such a companion as my Olivia, I flattered myself Lady Mortington would in time not only be reconciled to the country, but even be brought to relish its peaceful, innocent enjoyments. My pleasing illusions I industriously concealed; I left it to your own perfections to work out my design, without informing you or her how much I expected from their influence. Every letter I have received from my daughter has increased rather than diminished my expectations. She mentioned you with more regard than she generally expresses for people she has known much longer. I was charmed to find appearances so promising—I now thought every thing would happen just as I had predicted. Oh, Olivia! I am awakened from a pleasing dream



dream in which my fears and apprehensions were lulled asleep—I am awakened to them all. What am I to think of the extravagant desire she betrayed for the journey, in which Lord Mortington has at last indulged her? What am I to think of the still more extravagant methods she has taken to accomplish her design? It must be so;—the hint you gave me, when you entreated her father's influence and my own in that affair, convinces me it must be so. You must have seen strong reasons for the request you made us---you would not have supported her in the violent opposition to the declared will of her Lord, unless you had dreaded the flights to which a disappointment might have carried her. Unhappy Alicia! I fear---I fear you are not wrongfully accused---how terrible

the reflection!—I do not thank thy mean accuser—thy accusation comes from an anonymous friend, another term for an enemy concealed. Yet strengthened by circumstances, loath as I am to give the informer credit, I dare not disbelieve the horrid insinuations. Read the inclosed in this place, Olivia! and let the confidence I repose in you confirm how highly—how very highly you are estimated in my friendship.

AN ANONYMOUS LETTER.

*To Mrs. Selwin.*

“MADAM,

“THE respectable character of yourself and family has engaged my friendship. I cannot see the honour of  
your

your house in danger of receiving a severe shock, without warning you of its approach, and most sincerely hope it may arrive in time for the exertion of your exemplary prudence to prevent the threatening evil. Lady Mortington has stooped to employ the meanest arts to conquer the wise resolutions of her discreet Lord. She bribed her physician—I will venture to affirm she had no pretensions to real illness, it was all a farce—illness was only pleaded, the better to accomplish her design. The poor husband is hood-winked—he is blinded by her artful contrivance, and the gratification of her desires has been the consequence. For your sake, Madam, I wish I had nothing worse to report of Lady Mortington; for this I might not have awakened your suspicions, it afflicts me to give a mo-

mother's heart is your maternal bosom;  
 I would rather have surrendered such  
 riches if I could. When I now remem-  
 ber the sister thought that motives  
 of affection—kindness as it is called  
 would be more than enough—it would be  
 enough in its efforts. To be plain,  
 Mrs. Seville the London journey  
 brought about by such difficulty—I will  
 not say, *unwillingly* contribution was  
 not so eagerly desired by your daugh-  
 ter, merely for the pleasure of dissipa-  
 tion—I need not enlarge. Recollect  
 Lord Bromsgrove, now Lord Derwent,  
 is every day expected in town. The  
 proofs she has given the world of her  
 attachment to that young nobleman,  
 I know are almost forgot, but I know  
 too, her partiality for him is as strong  
 or stronger than ever. Now, if she  
 cannot be prevailed on to drop all ac-  
 quaintance

quaintance with his Lordship, the world's eyes are not so fast closed but they will open again to any new error in her conduct—scandal will again revive, and she inevitably become the subject of every one's satirical observation. Believe me, Madam, I know more of Lady Mortington than she or any person else imagines. I dare assure you, she might have been brought to remain contentedly enough in the country, if Lord Derwent's return had not intervened. It was his return that made her determinations ungovernable. I have no doubt but your good sense will put you in a method to prevent the fatal issue, which may otherwise attend this unfavourable expedition. I beg you will contrive it so as not to discover that you have had any other warning but what might be reasonably

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sonably expected from your own wisdom and experience. I have the honour Madam, to conceal my name under the title of your friend, and the friend of your family."

MRS. SELWIN IN CONTINUATION.

Now, my dear Olivia, what think you of the writer of this most extraordinary epistle? Keep it by you—have it always in view—to discover if possible the detestable author;—on whatever truths the contents are founded, the motives which occasion their being communicated to me, I am sure, are detestable. Carefully watch, amongst those of Alicia's female acquaintance, who are most in her confidence. The hand is feminine, though infinitely disguised—how greatly are our sex degraded



graded by envy! This shocking letter, depend on it, comes from one who knows too much of Lady Mortington's heart—Friendship is a word seldom understood in high life, but for the purposes of prostitution. I know your diligence—I rely on it for finding out this dangerous incendiary;—examine every card, every scrap of paper—addressed to my daughter;—compare the writing with what I send you, and notwithstanding the disguise, it is ten to one but we trace out the enemy of her reputation. This is an essential step to my repose; once got over, I shall again entertain my former hopes of drawing her from the brink of a precipice on which she totters. To you only my secret shall be disclosed till the design I have formed is accomplished; as soon as I arrive at a certainty, her pretended

pretended friend shall be fully exposed; then, when she sees this friend in her proper colours, if the discovery does not open her eyes, if it does not cause her to see, to shudder at her situation, I have done with hope—I have done with expectation. A daughter of the house of Selwin cannot, I presume to think, be premeditatedly wicked. Oh! that I may be able to snatch this darling daughter from the infatuation by which her senses are fascinated! May I not be made the blessed instrument to eradicate from her once innocent mind, the pernicious weeds of a wrong education, with which that mind has been blighted, suffocated, and by which has been stopped the growth of every natural, every moral duty? Dear, dear Olivia, pity my distress—afford me your assistance—I ask it in more than

than I have yet requested. Let your humanity forgive what the dignity of your character, without its interposition, might resent. I ask you not to be the spy of Lady Mortington's actions, but I intreat you to be the preserver of her fame. Whenever you perceive her conduct doubtful, spare not yourself or me; as you value my peace—as you value my friendship—acquaint me with your suspicions, if you have any, before it be too late to make my knowledge of them serviceable to her preservation. Whatever you say to me in confidence shall be buried in the silent recesses of my own bosom; not even my husband shall know our correspondence on this subject; and my soul shall bless you. Should you refuse me this mark of your attachment, the stab you give me

me

me will be next in severity to what I should receive in the actual dishonour of my daughter, because I shall ever think by your condescension her fate might have been prevented. . I will press you no farther, dearest Olivia ; disappoint not the hopes I have entertained ; proceed in that line chalked out for you by one who loves you with all the fondness of a mother, and to whom the delicacy of your character is as dear as the honour of her own.

I long, my beloved child, to hear from your own mouth the vicissitudes that you tell me have hitherto marked your life ; we will weep together over the afflictions with which you must have struggled. No sorrows which the tenderest parent could prevent, shall ever again disturb the tranquillity  
of

of your days. I am content to defer the recital to our next meeting ;—your disposition, and the reliance I have on your observing with exactness the request of my soul, will, I trust, render that meeting a happy one ;—it is by your means all my views of comfort must be realized..

I write by this post to Lady Mornington, but shall carefully avoid giving her the least cause to suspect my present sentiments. Full of hope and affection, I embrace and bid you adieu !

LETTER

## LETTER XVI.


*Lady Nelson to Mrs. Schwin.*

Montpellier.

**L**ORD Derwent, my dear mother leaves this place so abruptly on hearing of the death of his father, that I have only time to write a few lines, but the treasure I send inclosed in them will amply make up for my deficiency. His Lordship sent, five minutes ago, a polite apology for not calling on us to take a personal leave before he sets out  
for

for England, which he was preparing to do as soon as his horses could be put to the carriage. He assures us nothing but the sincerest affliction a man can feel on losing the best of parents could prevent him from bidding us adieu, and desires we will honour him with our commands. This is the purport of his note, and we make the most of this sudden opportunity to tell you we are in health—to say we continue in the resolution of embracing you at the time we first proposed. If I were not confined to a moment I should have a thousand things to speak of about the Duke de Deni; he has honoured us with such particular attentions, that he certainly would have been entitled to our esteem if we had not first been acquainted with the Count Aluredus. You will not accuse  
us

us of ingratitude that we return his civilities with coolness, when you have read the packet we received three days ago. The Duke accompanies Lord Derwent as far as Paris. I hope he will not return here. I hope his absence will be supplied by the presence of his excellent brother. It is with regret we part from Lord Derwent; that regret is doubled by the occasion that calls him from us. I always thought the late Earl a worthy, good-natured, inoffensive man, and was shocked at the sudden manner in which he was taken from his family. What a representative fills his place—sensible—generous—honourable—accomplished;—few men deserve all these appellations with so much justice as Lord Derwent. The good qualities of this young nobleman must afford  
my





my father and yourself great pleasure, notwithstanding you have both been so highly disgusted with the impropriety and unkindness of his mother. Lord Derwent's return to England gives me no uneasiness on the score of Lady Mortington ; I have the firmest reliance on the goodness of his heart ; besides, I know the passion for my sister which once occupied that heart is now entirely eradicated. I am obliged to send away my packet, or I would be more explicit. Farewell, my dearest parents, I bid you hastily farewell.

LETTER

## LETTER, XVI.

*The Count Aluredus to Sir William  
Nelson.*

(Inclosed in the preceding.)

Paris:

**T**O support the afflictions of Heaven requires absolute submission to its divine dispensations. To combat with the unkindness, with the cruelty of man, is infinitely more difficult. In the former we expect our resignation will be greatly rewarded ;—from the latter all such prospects are excluded. Forgive, my amiable friends, the obtrusion

trusion of a gloomy sentiment, which perhaps I ought to have suppressed, till I had made those enquiries after your healths, and those acknowledgments of my unabated attachment, which should have rescued me from the black sin of ingratitude. It was the emotions of that very attachment which gave birth to the sentiment I have just expressed; it occurred to me, when I reflected that my unnatural brother, not contented with robbing me of a treasure in which my soul delighted, had also driven me from your presence. Let me do him the justice to say, that of the latter he is unintentionally guilty;—he did not know that in your friendship I was beginning to find some alloy, if not an abatement of my sorrows. He had no  
reason

reason to suppose I could ever more taste of comfort, when with his own hand he had dashed to the ground the rich vessel in which was contained the whole sum of my earthly happiness. Disappointed in every wish my heart has entertained, desperate is my situation! My peace, my health, my disposition, I fear, have fallen the sacrifice. I feel not as I used to feel—I am tired with making excuses for the faults and frailties of others—I am too much disgusted by them. I have not always wanted a proportion of that benevolence so necessary to the character of a man, and of a christian. I am not what I have been—my temper is soured—I am peevish—I am fretful—I am the prey of a devouring discontent. Can such a wretch make pretensions to your friendship?

friendship? But, whilst I confess myself unworthy of your friendship, I have still a claim on your compassion.

Is not compassion nearly allied to affection? At least in my own ideas I will not disunite them, as it draws me closer to your hearts, and it is of consequence to my repose that I should not be thrown from thence, or that my memory should not be cherished by you with more than modern warmth. The repeated shocks my mind has sustained, shakes the foundation of a constitution naturally infirm.—I presume not to mark out the time of my release; but when that time arrives, I shall receive the divine mandate as a peculiar mercy. Perhaps, my dear Sir William, perhaps, my dear Lady Nelson, it may not be permitted me again to

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embrace you; but my love for you shall descend with me to the grave. Will you add one more kindness to my list of obligations? Will you accept a trust which I cannot bequeath to any but yourselves? The nature of it I shall explain hereafter; I must first bring you acquainted with the person it concerns, which can only be done by proceeding in the account I was giving you of my dear unfortunate sister, when the Duke de Deni's arrival interrupted my recital. I am now impatient to relate the conclusion, lest a second time I should be stopped by an event which must silence me for ever, and leave you at a loss to guess my motives for the trust with which I have dared to burthen you, even without waiting your permission for doing it.

You

You will not have forgot the deplorable situation in which I discovered my Maria, or the circumstances that had driven her to such unheard-of extremities. I have also told you that she fainted in my arms before I had found out in her expiring form; the features of my ever-loved, once lovely sister. I will pass over the distraction that seized me when I saw the hand of death busied in destroying what yet remained of the beauteous edifice—when I felt it struggling to tear her from my embraces. I screamed aloud, my screams brought up Annanette; we lifted the dying Saint to her bed; she was already panting for breath, and more than half an angel. I was not master of myself, or recollection; tears, and groans, made me incapable of assisting her. Annanette was more col-

lected—she flew to a cup-board, and brought from thence a small phial, with the contents of which she rubbed her hands, her nose, her forehead. Maria once more opened her eyes, she fixed them on my face, full of death, but full of sweetness; she there read that poignant woe which does not admit of expression. She faintly smiled—she would have spoke, but a sigh that entered my very soul was all she uttered. I was kneeling at the side of her bed, her hands hard grasped in mine, as if I meant to detain the blessed Spirit from that heavenly mansion after which it was aspiring. Her hands wetted with my tears she drew from me—she drew them away with an eagerness which shewed her apprehensions that she should not be permitted time to perform some act necessary to  
the



the peace of her last moments. Taking from her breast a paper sealed with black—trembling—almost convulsed—she delivered it to me, and pressed my hands to her lips with such fervour, as shewed she would enforce, by her emotions of tenderness, the trust she had committed to my charge. This was the last effort of nature—it was the last of affection;—in the same moment she performed it, her pure soul deserted its grief-worn body, and flew for shelter to the bosom of its Maker. I had no eye to observe, no officious friend to increase, by endeavouring to restrain my sorrows—I indulged them freely and they became more softened—more supportable—from the loose I gave them. When I could tear myself from all that was mortal of my Maria, I crept softly down the dark stairs

by which I had ascended, and found my way to a gloomy parlour, that seemed the recess of misery, for that reason more fit for my reception. To have seen every friend I had in the world expire at my feet, could not have augmented my despair, yet a trifle did augment it. A work-bag, which was my own gift in her happier days, struck me at my entrance, it was lying on a sorry table—I could go no further—I threw myself on a chair, and my head sunk down on the poor relick—I felt as if I had been overtaken by some new misfortune. My faculties were all suspended; and when I appeared most buried in profound contemplation, I was not master of a single thought—a single idea. I was roused from my stupor by the noise of feet trampling in the chamber above—I started from  
the

the place in which I was sitting, and for an instant could not conceive by what this trampling was occasioned. It was but an instant—alas! my mind began to awaken—recollection told me the sad, sad cause. I had already given my orders which were to lay her in her bed, and to inform me as soon as it was proper for me to return to her apartment. Annanette obeyed my orders with exactness, and the remainder of that woe-fraught night I passed in the chamber of death, every moment looking in upon my Maria, as if she had been still sensible to my unremitting attention. The day broke—it penetrated to this chamber of death—darkness fled before the rays of morning—all, all but the darkness of my soul—that it could not dispel. When every necessary office was performed

preparative to removing the body, it was borne to a house which Annette, by my directions, had provided for me at no great distance; but before I spoke of her removal, I should have told you, that the day after her decease, as I intended carrying her remains to France, I thought it right to examine the paper she had put into my possession, lest it might contain some request with which I ought to be acquainted. The task was painful, but it was unavoidable, and I forced myself to undertake it. Trembling, I broke the sable seal, and casting my eye on the cover, which I had not till then observed, found it directed to myself in this affecting manner:—"The contents of this packet are designed for the only friend my adversity has left me, my dear affectionate brother the  
"Count

“ Count Aluredus, to be delivered af-  
“ ter my death. The hand of Heaven  
“ is upon me, I shall not be permitted  
“ to rejoice in his presence. To your  
“ care, my good, my faithful Anna-  
“ nette, I commit this charge—seek  
“ out my paternal brother, when he re-  
“ turns to France, and deliver it with  
“ your own hand.”

The contents of this packet were written about the time I came back to Paris, and in which many parts of her story are mentioned, such as you are already acquainted with. I would send you the original, but it has, ever since I was possessed of it, been my constant bosom companion ; I cannot tear it from thence to risk it by an uncertain conveyance ; neither can I send you an exact copy. I am infirm—my  
F 5 eyes

eyes fail me—the office of transcribing it must not be entrusted to another. I am persuaded the task I have already undertaken will be equal, or more than equal, to my strength and spirits; if ever I should be so happy to meet you again, you shall have it to peruse. I am not partial, when I tell you it is worthy the pen of a Socrates; and that it would draw the tear of sensibility from hearts unsoftened—untaught in the rugged school of adversity. A hundred times I laid down the soul-penetrating paper, as often resumed it with agitation next to distraction. When I came to these words, visibly blotted with her tears—“To your paternal  
“protection I bequeath all that now  
“remains of your unfortunate sister—  
“a poor deserted, friendless, orphan—  
“the precious pledge of an innocent,  
“but

“ but unhappy union ;” I could go no farther, it was the first moment I had leisure from my griefs to bestow a thought on the child ; I had even forgot that when I first saw Annanette, she had informed me my Maria was a mother. I reproached myself severely for the omission—I instantly went in search of Annanette, that I might lose no time in taking to my heart the treasure with which it was entrusted. Annanette answered my eager enquiries with tears, which had never ceased flowing for my recent misfortune ;— she told me, that her dear lady, though far gone in a decline, would not be persuaded from making an attempt to suckle her child, but that office was more than she had strength to perform ; that being too much straightened in her circumstances to bring home so

F 6      expensive


expensive a servant as a nurse to supply her inability, she had been obliged, against her inclinations, to place it with a poor woman in the neighbourhood, who was contented with a small gratification for her trouble in nursing Mademoiselle Aluredus. My God! cried I, interrupting her, has she then given my name to her daughter? My Lady would have her christened by no other, replied the good creature, sobbing; she said your Lordship was her only friend; she said she should die in agonies, were it not for the certainty her soul entertained, that you would live to return—that you would be a father to her infant. I will—I will—exclaimed I, hardly able to support the different emotions which oppressed me—but go, run, Annanette, bring me—She staid to hear no more, she understood





stood enough of my impatience, and flew to execute those orders which she had only received in part. I now returned to my melancholy employment. —I had but just finished my sister's last pathetic irresistible injunctions, and resolved faithfully to observe them, when Annanette returned with the dearest proof her angelic mistress could leave me of her confidence in my honour—of her confidence in my affection. I caught the lovely, smiling legacy to my bosom, and from that moment felt myself a parent. Joy brightened the features of Annanette; she could not see me bestow the fondest caresses on her little charge, unaffected by pleasure; she fell at my feet, clung round my knees, and by a thousand extravagances convinced me more than ever of her attachment to my sister.

ter. I did not see them unmoved; they made me form a design, which I afterwards carried into execution—it was a sudden resolution taken in consequence of Maria's posthumous request. My heart burnt to acquit itself of this request. I broke from the officious transports of Annanette, and carried my sweet child to the humble chamber which held the precious remains of her blessed, thrice-blessed mother. Kneeling by her bed-side, and taking one of her clay-cold hands in mine, whilst her endearing infant, smiling at woe, rested on my knee; I vowed upon that hand to fulfil every wish she had expressed. This vow was registered in the awful presence of the Almighty, and I called upon his justice to deal with me according to the exactness with which I should perform



form it. I also in the same devout ceremony solemnly adopted her orphan innocent. Though my eyes overflowed, yet I felt my mind much relieved after I had followed the dictates of my duty and of my affection. At that instant I was an enthusiast—it could not be real—it must have been the workings of my own disordered imagination. I fancied,—but I blush even at telling you to what lengths I was hurried by a superstitious deception—I fancied when I had paid this grateful tribute to the manes of my Maria, I fancied an air of satisfaction was diffused over her pale countenance, which seemed to tell me her eternal felicity wanted but this addition to render it perfect.

Before

Before I proceed farther, I must acquaint you with the purport of that paper, which I call my bosom companion. To give you a full idea of what my sister requested, and what I promised, I shall here draw up a short abstract from the original :

ABSTRACT.

‘ I have now laid before you, my  
‘ dearest brother, the persecutions  
‘ which forced me to seek an asylum  
‘ in this inhospitable country. Grief  
‘ and poverty pursued me hither ; they  
‘ hunted me even to the gates of death ;  
‘ no kind friend interposed to ward off  
‘ their approach—no benevolent hand  
‘ stretched itself out to snatch me  
‘ from their devouring gripe. I am fa-  
‘ tally entangled in the web misfortune  
‘ has

‘ has spun to ensnare me ; and in your  
‘ absence—your regretted absence, can  
‘ find out no method of escaping. I  
‘ complain not in resentment of the  
‘ Duke de Deni ; that God, whose  
‘ gracious summons I hourly expect,  
‘ and confiding in whose infinite mercy  
‘ I shall not tremble to appear before,  
‘ can witness the strength of my sis-  
‘ terly affection, which all the Duke’s  
‘ unkindness has not been able to obli-  
‘ terate.

‘ Difference of opinion, in the essen-  
‘ tial point on which hangs our eter-  
‘ nal welfare, has caused his error—has  
‘ governed my fate ;—he was confirmed  
‘ in his, I was not less steady to my  
‘ own, and neither of us could sub-  
‘ mit ; but I hope in this one propo-  
‘ sition.

‘ sition he will not oppose me, which  
‘ is, that our forgiveness may be sin-  
‘ cere and mutual. Tell him I die in  
‘ perfect love with him, and in charity  
‘ with the world—but whilst you tell  
‘ him this, conceal from his knowledge  
‘ that I am mother to the little orphan I  
‘ have bequeathed to your protection.  
‘ Should he discover my Aluredus to  
‘ be his niece whilst in a state of in-  
‘ fancy, I foresee such difficulties that  
‘ she would have to encounter, as  
‘ makes me shudder but to think of.  
‘ I who could calmly sacrifice all my  
‘ splendid prospects—forsake my fami-  
‘ ly—my friends—my country—to pre-  
‘ serve entire those principles in which I  
‘ have been educated, cannot support the  
‘ bare idea that my darling should ever  
‘ fall a martyr to her’s, as I have done  
‘ to

‘ to mine. The repose of my soul in  
‘ in some degree, depends on her being  
‘ brought up in the religion of her  
‘ parents, and that she should be per-  
‘ mitted to enjoy it unmolested. This  
‘ will never be the case should the  
‘ Duke de Deni interpose that autho-  
‘ rity to which by nature he may think  
‘ himself entitled ; therefore the con-  
‘ cealment I have mentioned is so neces-  
‘ sary during her infant years. Were  
‘ all Catholics like my much-loved  
‘ Aluredus, how easy—how happy—  
‘ would be my exit !

‘ Oh ! my dear, my kind, my excel-  
‘ lent brother, receive this only pledge  
‘ of love I have to offer—my poor,  
‘ deserted, friendless daughter ! be a  
‘ father to her necessities, the guardian  
‘ of

• of her innocence ; above all, be you  
• the preserver of those rights, to main-  
• tain which, I become a willing victim,  
• and would lay down a thousand lives,  
• could the human being admit of death  
• more than once to know she would be  
• established in them. In the same humble  
• attitude in which I pay my devotions  
• to Heaven, I now address my petitions  
• to you ; with the same warmth, the  
• same energy I deliver them ; turn not  
• away from the last request of thy  
• kneeling, weeping, expiring Maria.'

This short abstract, my compas-  
sionate friends, is enough to inform  
you of my motives for what otherwise  
might have appeared mysterious in  
my future conduct, and more than I  
have been able to transcribe, without  
paying;



paying that tribute annexed to humanity.

I drop my pen—I cannot proceed—  
I am touched too nearly.

**LETTER**

## LETTER XVIII.

*Count Aluredus in continuation.*

**I**N consequence of that sacred vow I had taken in the presence of God, and my dear departed Saint, I immediately wrote to the Duke de Deni—I acquainted him with her death—I spoke as much of the deplorable situation in which I discovered her, as I thought necessary to reach his heart, and awaken him to repentance for the share he had in her distresses. My reflections were not severe, but they reached his

his heart as I intended. It was many years before he recovered his former cheerfulness—her memory became dear to him—he has shed a thousand tears in my presence—he was never tired with heaping reproaches on himself for the unbrotherly treatment that drove her from our protection. The severity of his own accusations silenced my upbraidings ; I could not add them to what he already suffered; I endeavoured, on the contrary, to soften his feelings of remorse. I was, for his own sake, charmed with the change in his disposition, and restored him to all that tender affection which by one act of cruel injustice he had before forfeited. His wife, as she had partaken of his crime, partook also of his penitence. At first, her presence was hateful to me ; but her unremitting endeavours to soothe

soothe my sorrows, and convince me of her contrition, had the usual effect on my soul ; I could no longer refuse my esteem, where no means were neglected to engage it. On the most friendly terms I lived with my brother and his family twelve years after the death of Maria ; but I must now go back, and explain to you the cause that a second time interrupted the harmony which reigned among us, never—never to be revived.

To keep the trust reposed in me not only secret from the Duke and his Duchess, but also from the prying curiosity of common spectators, who could have no interest in our concerns, I took the following precautions before I returned with the body to France. The first thing I did was, to give the  
name

name of Annanette, instead of Aluredus, to the lovely child of my adoption. I have told you, that when I saw the good woman, who had a real claim to that name giving me the most moving proofs of her love and attachment to my infant, a sudden design formed itself in my imaginations. This design was no other than to make her pass for her parent, which would take off all suspicion of my sister's being her true mother ; and the more I examined the propriety of this artifice, the more I approved it.

Annanette was the daughter of a favourite servant my mother brought with her from England, who, having married in France, on her death-bed, recommended this girl to the patronage

of the Duchess. Annanette was but little older than my sister, when her mother died, from which time she was taken into the same nursery, where she received in common those instructions that were liberally bestowed on the mind and education of her young lady. Like her too she was a Protestant, and too faithful to forsake the fortunes of her mistress, even in their blackest aspect. Her accomplishments were such as would have fitted her for the superintendence of children, whose improvement in polite acquirements might have been the first object of a parent's care, nor was she less qualified to teach the more unmodern lessons of morality and honour, which, in the judgment of thinking people, are still more estimable. It is in education,

cation, as it is in life—many things are useful—many more we call necessary; but few only are absolutely essential.

Convinced that my utmost researches would never lead me to the discovery of a person more properly qualified for the governess of my dear infant, I did not hesitate to confer on her a still more interesting title. I knew it was an indulgent trust, and confidence I could safely repose in her—I knew she would abuse neither. Assured she would preserve the character of a mother, without forgetting her station of a servant, I delayed not to signify my intention. The manner in which she accepted this important charge made me applaud the resolution I had taken in her favour—sensibility, joy, and gratitude, were the only emotions she

G 2                      betrayed.

betrayed. It is easily perceived, by the eye of observation, from whence the passions derive their source. I was pleased to see that in her they sprung not from the adulterated fountain of self-interest, but from the genuine friendship she entertained for her late lady, as well as from an unbounded affection for my little darling. She was not exalted in her own opinion; it was the prospect of never being separated from that dear child which sent out her expressions of transport with so great velocity, as almost overpowered me by their force—I silently blessed Heaven for directing my choice, and turned away to prevent being further oppressed by this grateful creature's acknowledgments.

Having now settled every thing with Annanette, I took a lodging for her  
far



far removed from the house I had hired before ; and making a considerable present to the poor woman who had hitherto nursed my beloved charge privately, removed Annanette and the little one to their new habitation. I would have got another nurse to supply the place of her, whom fear of having my scheme detected, had forced me to dismiss ; but the fictitious mother assuring me it was the custom to wean children of her age, and that Mademoiselle was so healthy, that she would answer with her life for the consequences—I submitted to her opinion.

The lodgings to which I conveyed them were neat and convenient. I allowed her two women servants and a footman, which she was to provide in her own name, or rather the name of

Arlington ; which, by my orders, she had assumed, and by which I shall for the future distinguish her, as you will in the remainder of my relation, know my own dear child by that of Annanette.

My motives for this finesse must be obvious—in giving her the name of her supposed mother, which name was familiar to the ear of my brother, I entirely excluded him from suspicion, and forwarded a deception innocent in its design, and by circumstances rendered unavoidable. After having settled my little family, the mistress of which was to pass for a widow of genteel fortune, I embarked with the remains of my dearest sister, for her native country. Oh, Sir William ! Oh, Lady Nelson ! I was the sincerest mourner

mourner that ever followed virtues like her's towards the dreary sepulchre—that cold inhospitable mansion, which incloses the brightest perfections with the same indifference as it does the wretched carcase stained with crimes, and defaced by vicious pursuits.—The Duke de Deni had written to request the body might be brought to his palace, which I thought it improper to oppose, seeing the distracted state of his mind when he signified his inclinations.

Permit me to draw a veil over this part of my narrative : ill as he has since requited my tenderness, I cannot even now reflect on the agonies I saw him suffer at our solemn entrance, without being too much softened for a brother, whom my own wrongs tell me

me I ought to throw from my affection. It will not be—I have a something in my nature repugnant to hate—I cannot hate the Duke de Deni—but I will fly from him—I will avoid him as the declared enemy of my repose.

My Maria's ashes were deposited in the tomb of her ancestors ; they were deposited in all the ostentatious pomp of funeral magnificence ; my brother directed it ; he thought he could not be too profuse. Alas ! why this profuseness ? why those immense sums squandered to carry that poor body back to its parent earth, which, when living, was suffered to pine in misery, to languish in neglect, and, last of all, to resign its being to the resistless claim of poverty ? Not long after her interment, when I could venture to  
speak

speaking on the subject, without dread of seeing the Duke relapse into those terrors of conscience which had alarmed me for his senses, as soon as I saw him tolerably composed, I spoke to him of the great obligations my sister owed, before and during her illness, to Annanette. I told him she was now the widow of a private English gentleman ; that she was left in narrow circumstances, with a child to maintain ; and, at the same time, declared my intentions of sending for them to France, that I might have an opportunity of returning some of those vast debts of kindness the worthy creature had, to the utmost of a very limited power, communicated to her unfortunate mistress ; adding, that every mark of favour I could bestow on Mrs. Arlington, or her infant, I should

always consider as a recompense inadequate to her unparelled fidelity. He heard me with more composure than I had reason to expect. You have a noble mind, my dear Count, said he; I adore your goodness; then catching my hand, and grasping it with fervour, you must not (continued he) refuse me the comfort of sharing with you in rewarding this friend of our dearest Maria. Oh, my sister! my sister! (he exclaimed) with my whole fortune would I purchase the remembrance of one—one single act of tenderness administered to thee in the season of thy adversity—Aluredus and Annanette, of all thy numerous friends and followers, are those only who can cherish thy idea without remorse, without terror. He groaned as he said this; then turning to the Duchess—tell me, I charge you, Madam,

dam, why this dear sister, this amiable sufferer, was driven from her paternal habitation, which should have been her sanctuary against misfortune? His wife was incapable of answering a question so unexpected; she burst into tears, and retired hastily, to avoid the angry glances with which he sternly saluted her. I interposed—I happily convinced him his resentment was unreasonable; he heard me with patience, and at length condescended to follow the Duchess. I was soon after desired to join them in her dressing-room; they had both been in tears; but nothing like reproach any more escaped his lips. She sent out a look which conveyed to me her thanks for the part I had acted, and told me, in a whisper, she would give the world to be more worthy of my friendship.

We now renewed our former conversation, when the Duke persisted in his resolution of joining in the support of Mrs. Arlington and her infant. I did not think proper to exasperate him, by refusing absolutely what he insisted on with a warmth so peremptory. I mentioned a trifling yearly allowance, which terms, with the utmost difficulty, I at last prevailed on him to accept, though, at the same time, he declared his gratitude should never be confined to so narrow a compass. My principal reasons for giving him any hand in this affair, were these: first, not to disoblige him; secondly, by allowing him to assist me in the support of Arlington, I secured my plan from detection; I also raised my brother's character, by laying in his way an opportunity to obliterate, by his goodness



ness to the favourite servant of his neglected sister, the aspersions by which it had been marked on her account—and last, not least of all, the honour this public countenance of her well-remembered domestic would reflect on the memory of my ever-loved, ever-regretted Maria.

My meaning was not to keep him ignorant of the young Aluredus's being his niece, longer than till I had seen her established in the world, established under the protection of a husband, who would openly defend her in those privileges which I was forced to maintain by stealth and by contrivance. I argued with myself in this manner—though I conceal her birth from the Duke, he will not be debarred her conversation; nature, no doubt, will find her

her way to his heart long before it is proper to inform him of the near relation that entitles her to his affection.

I looked forward with pleasure when I should be at liberty to divulge my secret, to present him with a niece, who, if she inherited half her mother's virtues, would be an honour to his family. My sister's command of silence extended no further than to the infant state of her daughter; I thought the Duke so truly sensible of his error, so truly penitent for its consequences, that I had not the least fear of his resenting my concealment or her injunctions, when he should be acquainted without reserve by what they were occasioned. It was never my design to receive the child and her official parent into my family; I rather chose to provide

vide them a house near my own, so near that I might continually keep the former under my eye, and inspect the conduct of the latter. By this means I secured to myself all the advantages I could propose, had they lived under my roof, without laying myself open to the censure of a world too much inclined, if our actions will admit of a double sense, to have fixed that which will do the least honour to our reputations.

When every thing was ready for their reception, I returned to fetch them from England; I could not trust my angel to cross the water under any other protection but my own; and the pretence I made to my brother for this expedition was, some business I had left unsettled when I was last in that  
that

that country. In all the duplicity in which I was by necessity involved, my heart never reproached me on any other occasion; I could have died rather than have submitted to have called in the assistance of art, though by such an auxiliary I might have gained the universe. Deception in the affair on which I was embarked, was become a duty; I owed it to Heaven—I owed it to my sister—I owed it to my conscience; I was not acting in opposition to its sacred dictates, when I condescended to methods which, in their common nature, are indefensible.

The Duke de Deni offered to accompany me to Britain, but I had many reasons for waving his proposal; he made it only to do me pleasure, and I had no difficulty in dissuading him  
from

from his purpose. A violent inclination to see again my darling child hurried me from France; the same impatience would not suffer me to take any repose after I landed at Dover. I arrived there at an unseasonable hour of the night; but no hour then appeared unseasonable. I ordered a carriage the moment I reached the inn; and as soon as it could be got ready, posted forward with more composure of mind than when I measured the same road in pursuit of that dear sister whose fate was now determined.

In all the various afflictions by which my life has been distinguished, I have ever found the horrors of suspense were more insupportable, than when the event I have most dreaded has amounted to certainty: with that  
intolerable

intolerable load am I now burthened; and it is more than probable I am doomed to bear it about me with the remnant of my unhappy days. It was about half an hour after eight in the morning, when I was set down at that house in which I had deposited my treasure: like a miser, on visiting his hoard, so I felt myself agitated with a thousand fears that death, or some other despoiler, might have entered my dwelling, and robbed me of my soul's riches. The eager knock I gave signified the arrival of a guest impatient for admittance; Arlington understood it; she came herself to the door—her countenance spoke all well; she had a presentiment it was me, yet screamed with surprize; her joy was so great, that she could not bid me welcome; however, she made up for her silence to the thousand

sand questions I asked her, by leading me instantly to the sweet subject of my enquiries.

As I stood with more than paternal fondness gazing on the little Annette, who rested her lovely cheek on the downy pillow of repose, undisturbed by those cares from which the infant state is alone exempted, I contemplated her with such exulting rapture, that if ever I was acquainted with true happiness, it was at the instant I describe. Arlington, who had by this time found the use of her tongue, began to evince, by expressions, those honest grateful sentiments which were better explained by the sensibility that had before occasioned her silence. I was afraid the sound of her voice would have awakened my charmer, and defeated

feated my present enjoyment — I beckoned with my finger—she took the hint, she answered it by laying one of her's on her lips. I had imperceptibly crept close to the bed-side—my transports were ungovernable—I could no longer resist their impulse. Bending one knee on the floor, I laid my face close to that of the innocent baby, and ventured gently to put my mouth to her forehead. How often—how apt are we to condemn in others what we do ourselves without a scruple. I had checked Arlington for a whisper, and the next moment committed a greater absurdity. Notwithstanding all my caution not to have her disturbed, my touch effected it ; she lifted up her long dark eye-lashes that concealed from my view such eyes as nothing but the finished beauty of her mother's  
ever



ever equalled. Smiling, she opened them; her smiles were heavenly—they discovered a thousand dimples that adorned a face fairer than the pure linen which covered the pillow on which she rested, whose whiteness seemed a foil to the delicacy of her complexion. The moment she saw Arlington, (for I had moved to a little distance, that she might not be frightened at the appearance of a stranger) she began to talk in a language of her own, but in a voice so musical as I could have listened to for ever without satiety, at the same instant she extended her lovely arms, which appeared to be formed of the purest marble, and executed by the masterly finger of proportion. Arlington, who understood her pretty jargon, was taking her from the bed, when, no longer able to hide myself, I stepped forward,

forward, and, in her night-cloaths, received her to my bosom.

My God! what were then my extatic emotions? If a parent could feel more for a child of his soul's affections, for his only, his darling offspring, I would not be that parent for the universe; any degree of fondness that could exceed what I felt, would have been insupportable; but I think I may aver, it was not in the power of possibility to exceed it. Instead of turning away, or shewing any surprise, (as I had apprehended) she received my caresses as if she had known they came from her only friend, who was to supply the place to her of father, mother, every dear, every tender relation. She played with my face, she entangled her fingers in my hair—but, amongst all  
her

her love-inspiring actions, that which most delighted me was an involuntary motion of her little hands, for laying them spread on my breast, she seemed to be taking possession of my heart in form.

The idea charmed me—I kissed her eyes, her forehead, and each cheek by turns—I promised none should ever supersede—none ever dispute with her the property she laid her claim to.

From her nursery I went to the room where my breakfast was prepared ; but I waited till Arlington had dressed and restored to me my infatuating cherub, before I would take any refreshment. The moment she was brought in, she shewed as much eagerness to fly from Arlington's arms into mine, as I did

did to receive her from them. It was with difficulty that I could force the humble creature to sit down in my presence even whilst she poured out the coffee; but telling her with a smile, she must learn to submit to the forms of her present, and forget her former station, she took her place, though not without feeling so much confusion at her own consequence, that, though her timidity demanded my approbation, it also bespoke my pity.

I was so much devoted to my Annette, who sat smiling and prattling on my knees, that if I had not purposely avoided adding to Arlington's uneasy restraint, I should have had no leisure the whole time I was at breakfast, to direct my looks towards the table—but the rattling of cups, the fall of the lid  
from

from the tea-pot, and some other trifling accidents, told me plainly enough, she would not easily recover from the disorder of her spirits on being obliged to exhibit in her new character. I know you will forgive me, my dear Sir William. I know Lady Nelson too will forgive me, for having engaged your attention so long, on a subject which, however interesting to myself, is by no means material to my narrative.—Should I go on thus dwelling on every incident impressed upon my memory, I should at last tire out your patience, and wear away my own abilities, to conclude the remainder of my wonderful undertaking. Wonderful it may be called in a man of my years, of my infirmities, who sits down, like a novelist, to relate his own adventures. Would to God my story had

warmth, nor did I regret the handsome provision he intended to bestow on the supposed mother of my adopted infant, who I determined should be brought up with all the elegance and splendour due to her birth, to her connections, to her future expectations, but, above all, due—doubly due—to the misfortunes of her amiable, ill-fated parent.

The Duke de Deni's liberality would make him overlook my profuseness; profuse I designed to be—nothing of expence was to be withheld in accomplishing the scheme I had projected; he could not possibly murmur at any seeming extravagance in my conduct, for which his own example became my precedent. — From those motives I closed with his proposal; and we settled  
this

this affair to our mutual satisfaction. The Duchess being present when this matter was adjusted, was so far from disapproving my brother's intentions, that with tears stealing down her cheeks, as a proof of my having forgiven her former severity, she desired I would accept from her five hundred livres in addition to the income proposed by the Duke towards the support of the common friend of their family. I was equally moved with the self-accusation contained in this request, as by the generosity of soul it discovered. My brother was still more affected ; he caught one of her hands, and putting it into mine, Is it possible, Count, (said he) so much sweetness should plead in vain ? I did not reject the offered hand, but I saw he was going to speak, and I would not interrupt him.

him. I fear, said he, it is a false tenet in our church, that teaches us Catholics cannot be too sanguine, or use any improper mode in bringing over heretics to their own opinions—you have not been blinded by prejudice; if our minds had been as enlarged, or our reason as unobscured as your's, Count, we might at this time have all been happy. I say nothing in defence of myself; but surely, brother, some indulgence is due, if not to me, to the errors of my wife, whose only fault has proceeded from wishing to be too perfect. Embrace her, Count, tell her she is pardoned, and confer a lasting obligation on us both. There was no withstanding, there was no resisting so forcible an attack on my tender passions; her own sensibility had already softened the resentment my heart held against

against



against her, and the Duke's pathetic address compleated their conquest. I did as my brother desired ; I embraced the Duchess, and assured her of my friendship, but refused her offered bounty in such a manner as gave her no cause of displeasure.

The rest of the day we spent together with the same social harmony, which, for twelve years following, suffered no interruption, nor did the Duchess ever after give me reason to suppose she was insincere in her sorrow for the fate of my sister, or in the professions of regard she made to myself.

In the evening before I went home, I looked in on my little family, and found Arlington employed in the motherly office of undressing her infant.

Annanette sprung towards me the moment I came near her; she held out her hands, she seemed to intreat I would take her in my arms. Arlington told me it was time Mademoiselle was in bed; but, notwithstanding all she could say, I diverted the child and myself a full hour—in tossing her up and down—counting the buttons on my coat—holding her up to the window, and dancing her before a glass. Her liveliness, and the exertion of her feet in the last exercise, began to fatigue me; I resigned her to Arlington; I promised to return the next morning, and charged her not to let my charmer lie in bed too long, that I might find her ready to receive me at an early hour. The remainder of that night I passed almost without sleep; I got into a train of reflections, which  
are


are the professed enemies of repose ; again and again I thought over every turning, every winding in the road before me, arranged over and over my whole plan of operations with exact precision. My ideas grew romantic ; I turned castle-builder, and raised such airy edifices of happiness as, had they stood on a real foundation, would have repaid me for all the malice, all the acrimony, with which fortune has delighted to pursue me. Why do I forestall my disappointments, when I know in their proper places they will come too fast on the friendly bosoms into which I pour them ? they are always next my thoughts ; I am never a moment disengaged from their obtrusion.

The next morning after this sleepless night, I found my blossom hand-

somer and more engaging than ever, waiting to give me the early reception I had bespoke the preceding evening. The fine laces which surrounded her lovely face, bosom, and hands, gave it a look of peculiar grace—of peculiar elegance : in short, Arlington had that day exhausted all her taste in dress, to render her little charge completely charming ; which, from a circumstance that followed, pleased me infinitely. I had just informed Arlington of her obligations to the Duke de Deni, when one of my servants brought me the billet annexed.

## B I L L E T.

My wife and I have taken possession of your house, and do not design to give it up till you let us know we have  
your



your permission to visit the good woman who is entitled to our affectionate regards : remember, we take no denial ; we must see and welcome her to France. Was it fair, Count, to steal this march upon your friends ? Our scheme was formed after you left us last night ; your early hours have defeated all our intentions—bid us follow you, and we seal your pardon.

DE DENI.

As soon as I had cast my eye over the contents, I took up a pen, and sent back by the same servant this answer :

A N S W E R.

My house is honoured by the reception of its present possessors ; but as  
11 6 they

they seem to desire a pretence to leave it, let them follow the bearer of this, and their condescension shall be rewarded by the thanks of their worthy pensioner ; and, if in her usual good-humour, by the smiles of a lovely infant, the most engaging of all children.

ALUREDUS.

Instead of sending this note, I should have gone in person to conduct them ; but I foresaw I had a difficult task to perform, which would detain me where I was, and find me full employment till their arrival. I was not mistaken ; for no sooner had I made known the honour intended her, than I thought the poor creature would have expired under the various assaults of surprize, terror,

terror, and confusion. I had but just got over her timid reluctance to sit in my presence; she was but barely able to support it with tolerable composure. It happened as I expected; the thoughts of appearing before the Duke and Duchess made her relapse into all her former frights, which nothing but the fear of offending me could have so far conquered, as to prevail on her to promise she should answer my summons, whenever I thought proper to order her attendance. Having gained this point, and advised her to exert some fortitude, that she might receive with less pain to herself a distinguishing mark of favour, which would be highly flattering to almost any other woman; I then told her, if she pleased, she might retire till I saw it necessary for her to return.—With an air full of humility,

humility, she seized on the liberty I had granted her, offering to take the child with her ; but I bade her leave it with me, and away she hurried, as if afraid my visitors would come upon her before she should have the power of making her escape.

My fondness for Annanette could not be declared too early, or too publicly ; to have concealed it, or dealt out my favours by stealth, was below the dignity of her real quality, which I then imagined would be one day brought to light, and degrading to that amazing fund of love, which on all occasions, I should make it my glory to publish for the sweet orphan of my care. These were my reasons for not parting with her when I dismissed Arlington ; I resolved that my brother and his wife, at  
the



the first entrance into the house, should witness the strength of my attachment, to prevent their being after surprized or disappointed at the lengths I should be carried in her education and future provision.

Arlington had been gone but a short time from the room, when the Duke and Duchess entered it. The first object that engaged their attention was my charmer—she was sitting at my side on a pillow of the sopha, playing with my watch-chain, which I had taken from my pocket to amuse her. My God ! they exclaimed, in the tone and attitude of astonishment. What an angel, cried the Duchess. My brother stood still ; he did not advance a step after he had once fixed his eyes on my beloved. What have we here, Count ?

Count?—Is it a real child, or is it the production of art which you have procured to deceive our senses? If the latter, whoever was the artist deserves to have his works immortalized. Such of his works as these, replied I, carrying Annanette towards him, were designed by the Divine Master for immortality—Here, take her—examine the materials of which she is composed, tell me then if it is possible for human skill to imitate the beauties which come thus perfect from the hands of our great Creator. As I said this, I threw her into his extended arms—extended to receive her. Nature struggled in the bosom of her uncle—I saw its workings with amazement, and began to fear it might lead to some questions that I wished him to avoid. Luckily for me, he did not understand from whence  
proceeded

proceeded his own emotions ; the lively efforts of blood, he mistook for the common efforts of admiration, which he bestowed on her in the most extravagant expressions. He almost smothered her with kisses, and did not seem to intend she should quit his arms, had not a thousand importunities obliged him to resign her to the caresses of the Duchess. At first my darling appeared pleased with their fondness, but at length, being often snatched from one to the other, her smiling face was over-clouded, and a burst of tears signified that she found herself incommoded.

The Duke and Duchess tried by various methods to lay the storm they had raised ; but I, pretending to be greatly disgusted with the noise of children, when

when they ceased to be good-humoured, rang the bell, and ordered a servant to take away Annanette, and put her into the hands of her mother.

This lovely child then (said my brother, after she was carried out) is the daughter of my dear Maria's faithful servant ; I remember her mother was remarkably plain in her person, but she has no reason to complain ; for in the charms of that infant, her own deficiency of beauty is made up with usury ; it would be infinite pity if so sweet a child should want education suitable to her other perfections ; that, my dear, must be our future care. I told him he had already contributed too largely to the support of her mother.

Alas !



Alas! when I pronounced the word mother; when I felt the sentence to which the word mother was united, I received such a check at my heart—a shock so violent, as I cannot describe. Reflection instantaneously conveyed me to that horrid den of poverty in which my Maria was suffered to languish out her wretched days—unfriended—unprotected—without the common supports of life—without the comfortable presence of hope. Yet, what did I say? I said he had already done too much for her mother, that mother, whom he had despised, neglected, forsaken. What I might further have added to my false assertion, was forgot; the vision of her sufferings occupied the whole space of memory. I begged we might talk on that subject some other time; and, turning confusedly

confusedly to the Duchess, to hinder their observing the agitated condition of my mind, I asked her permission to present to her the good Arlington. By all means, said she; I am impatient to embrace, and assure her, not only of my protection, but my friendship—my request ought to have prevented your application; but that dear bewitching child occasioned my omission. My brother added something to the same purpose, and immediately I ordered her attendance. She obeyed my summons—her reception was so gracious; so many obliging acknowledgments were made to her, so many kind praises lavished on her supposed daughter, that though she entered trembling and confounded, I observed with pleasure her confusion soon abated. The extreme affability of the Duke and  
Duchess

Duchess made the scene less tremendous than she expected; nor do I ever recollect to have seen her appear to more advantage than in their presence. They obliged her to sit between them; they confessed themselves her debtors, and loaded her with assurances of their favour. The good sense she was mistress of, displayed itself in her returns of gratitude, which were accompanied with so much modest humility, as perfectly charmed both my brother and his wife. Their visit was not a short one; they promised to repeat it; and before they took their leaves, the Duchess told Arlington she would forfeit her friendship, unless she came often to the palace, and brought with her the enchanting Annanette. I promised for her obedience at such times as she might be most private; and for  
twelve

twelve years after, a day seldom passed in which they did not oblige her to bring the child to them.—This was a great advantage to my beloved.

There was not in the kingdom a woman more highly accomplished than the Duchess de Deni. She had taken so great an inclination to my sweet innocent lamb, that she examined into her improvements, and directed her studies with a solicitude nearly maternal. Often has she requested Arlington to give up the infant entirely to her care; for, that having no child of her own, and loving Annanette with a parent's fondness, she should experience the effects of that fondness, not only in her present attention, but in her future establishment. These offers were rejected politely, but with firmness,



ness, by my agent, as often as repeated.

The Duchess, finding all her solicitations could not avail, at last dropped them, contenting herself with giving my daughter every proof of her affection to which she had been accustomed.

I shall no longer tire out your patience with tedious descriptions, which, in the infancy of my child, I thought may not be unnecessary to give you some idea of the unbounded love that filled my whole soul for the comfort, the staff, the very life of my existence, and to shew you at how early a period I began to place my views of happiness on this darling, this one darling object.

When

When they had been settled some years under my own inspection, and honoured with the auspices of my brother's family, the countenance the Duke and Duchess gave Arlington, made me find no difficulty in selecting such company to visit her, whose acquaintance I should approve for my daughter, as she advanced towards maturity. It cultivated an intimacy with men of the greatest genius, both of your nation and my own; so that as Annanette grew up, the frequent opportunities she had of conversing with them, enlarged her mind; and refined her sentiments, whilst it added a brilliancy to her native wit, which was more astonishing than common.—Her acquirements began to shew themselves even before that season when childhood is supposed to be capable of

no more than making its language understood. I weep to think how infinitely she surpassed my fondest wishes, my most sanguine expectations; my tears increase when I reflect how cruelly she has been torn from the bosom of her doating father.

It is too much for me—I find myself sick at heart—I will endeavour to walk a little in my garden.

## CONTINUATION.

My sickness has left me—I am better—I will try to finish my narrative. Arlington had not long been used to her elegant house, a genteel equipage, a respectable retinue, and the appellation of Madame, before she lost some part of that painful timidity which so

greatly incommoded her when first she assumed the rank to which her merit had exalted her. The humility of her mind suffered no abatement, but the ease and politeness of her manners gained her universal respect.—Every one applied to her judgment in any little incident that required the advice of a person who was well acquainted with the world, with its laws, and with its customs. Though fixed in a country of catholics, she was never molested on account of her principles; and your Ambassador's chapel answered all the ends of living under a Protestant government. I found the means of engaging his excellency's chaplain in my interest; and, by his assistance, my dear child's instruction in that religion to which she was destined by the last request of her beloved mother, was not

not confined to the limited capacity of one director, and that director a woman.

I had not yet thought it proper to instruct my Aluredus with the secret of her name or birth. She believed me, the friend to whom her suppositious parent owed her subsistence—the friend to whom she herself was indebted for advantages of education so much above the humility of her mother's former station, Arlington having acquainted her that I had redeemed them from very low circumstances. These considerations alone were enough to secure me the duty, the tenderest affections, of my dear child. She loved me with the same fervency as if I had been her father. She divided her attentions equally between

the person she supposed her mother and myself. The Duke and his Duchess enjoyed the second place in her heart. It was impossible for a young creature of so amiable a disposition to receive such continual marks of favour as they bestowed on her, with indifference or insensibility. She had scarcely attained her twelfth year, when fame began to send out her praises; they were not confined to Paris; they were sounded through the remotest corners of France.

Mademoiselle Arlington was spoke of as the prodigy of the age; her beauty her wisdom, her modesty, and superlative accomplishments, were the topics of almost every conversation. My heart bounded at the report of fame. I have often called upon the blessed spirit of my Maria, to look down on  
her

her perfect daughter, and share with me the transports of a delighted parent. Oh! had she been permitted to hear me! had she been appointed the guardian angel of our joint treasure, I should not at this time groan under the severest of all afflictions.

I was obliged to tear myself from this adorable child, just as she entered her thirteenth year. Honour commanded me—I went against the infidels—the cruel commands of honour were not to be resisted; but when I obeyed them, I left my soul in the possession of my Aluredus. I cannot recount the particulars of our melancholy adieus. Dear, dear child! How was she distressed! I am distracted by recollection. My God! my God! hast thou still preserved her? Oh, if yet

she wanders in this vale of misery, guide, I beseech thee, my feeble steps to the place of her retreat; or, if thy hand of mercy has extended itself to snatch from oppression my precious darling, take me also, oh, my God! unite me to her in those eternal mansions of bliss from which comforts flow, unsullied by grief, untainted by misfortunes. I have been self-interrupted—forgive the interruption.

Before I left France, I received the strongest assurances from my brother and the Duchess, that they would endeavour to make my absence supportable to my adopted, an appellation by which they always distinguished my lovely child. This they promised, without suspecting how much they were themselves concerned in her welfare,  
or



or how great a claim nature had given her to my brother's indulgence : But enough on this subject, I shall tell you by and by how well this brother performed the promises he made me.

I did not quit my country till I had fixed Arlington above the possibility of feeling my absence in pecuniary matters ; yet this by no means lessened her regret. The genuine tears she shed, of grateful tenderness, must have increased my sorrows, if, after I had torn myself from more than life or happiness, my affliction would have admitted of addition. I gave her in charge carefully to hide from Annanette the secret she had in keeping, not that I doubted my child's prudence, but I dreaded her complacency.

I was afraid the insinuating distinction she received from the Duke and Duchess might, when she knew how nearly she was related to the one and connected with the other, have found a way to her confidence. Had this happened, the consequence of such a discovery would, I thought, defeat all my endeavours to perform that sacred engagement, for the observance of which, my very soul was plighted.

I did not suppose I should be long absent, and resolved at my return to disclose, under proper restrictions, as much of her real situation as it was necessary she should be acquainted with. Some events in the life of her parents, some exceptionable parts in the Duke de Deni's conduct for the sake of her future peace, I intended to have buried

sied in oblivion ; gladly would I have banished them from my own memory, but that was impossible.

The expedition on which I embarked was unfortunate to myself, and destructive to all my prospects. The ship in which I commanded was, after an obstinate resistance, in which I lost half my brave warriors; taken by the infidel-wretches who bear malice so inveterate to men of my order, that, when we fall into their hands, death is the greatest mercy we have to expect. Even this mercy was withheld from me ; my name was not unknown in that barbarous country ; my treatment, on this account, was doubly severe. Five years I dragged after me the abject chain of slavery ; my body was not spared the daily lashes of cruelty ;

but my mind suffered torments a thousand times more intolerable than their lashes could inflict. My child, my darling child ! it was not the stripes of my enemies that drew the tear of agony from my eyes ; it was to leave thy infant innocence that wrung it from me ; to leave thee before I had seen the fruition of my only hope, before I had given thee to the arms of a protector, who would tenderly shelter thee from the blast, the storms of fortune. To leave thee thus, humbled me in the dust of despondency ; to leave thee thus, made me turn away from the wretch's only asylum. I could have welcomed, I could have courted death, as my best, my kindest friend ; I could have courted him to my embraces ; but when he seemed approaching near me, I saw in him the enemy of my Aluredus,

dus,

das, the enemy who would cut off all possibility of my ever more officiating to her in the fond office of a parent, a guardian—I saw him in this light, and in this light only wished to avoid him. Heaven was at length moved by my prayers, and softened by my lamentations. When I least expected so great a blessing, by a miracle I was restored to freedom; by what means it was accomplished, I cannot here inform you; they are circumstances too intricate to mingle with my present recital. I shall content myself with telling you, that I returned to France about six months before I had the honour of meeting you at Montpellier, where I came to try if the air of that place could prop up my tottering constitution, till I should have performed one act more, which, if attended with

success, will make me lay my head low on the earth without regret, without a murmur.

It is impossible for me to describe to you the situation of my mind, from the time I escaped captivity to the time when I found myself within the gates of Paris ; I can only compare it to a ship tossing on the tempestuous ocean, now lifted to the heavens, the next moment plunged in the briny bowels of the deep—so one instant was I elated on the pinion of hope, the succeeding buried in the gloomy abyss of despair ; now calmly gliding on the bosom of imaginary security, anon agitated by suspense, and racked with direful apprehensions. The first person I met on entering the city, was my Taylor. To see one single face that I knew,

knew, inspired me with joy. I stopped the carriage; and, as he was hastily passing, beckoned him to me. I felt as much eagerness to speak to this poor man, as if it had been alone in his power to confirm my hopes, or ascertain my fears; so foolish are the miserable, that they will catch after shadows, where the substance has eluded their pursuit. How absurd to expect from the mouth of this obscure person, any intelligence of my child! Could he possibly inform me if she was well or ill, happy or unhappy, protected or unprotected; if she lamented my absence as I had done my tedious separation from her; if she sorrowed for my death; or if she believed me still numbered with the living? In all these particulars, my soul passionately longed to be instructed. His face striking my memory,

memory, when I was most incapable of reasoning, like a drowning man I caught at the first reed that offered. When I beckoned him toward me, I had not considered that, without answering any purpose, I was only prolonging that time, the slowness of which, in bringing me to my treasure, I had before bitterly complained of. Monsieur Tastetee' approached with a look that convinced me he had no recollection of my person. Perhaps it was a weakness; but I own to you I was shocked at the alteration that must be so very visible when it could blot all traces of remembrance from the mind of a man who had known me from the age of twenty. Had I been then capable of reflection, I should have thought the hard labour, the fatigues, and cruelties I had undergone in a five years'



years' slavery, made his forgetfulness an event not only to be expected, but most wonderful, that I should still be living to observe the effects it had produced. He addressed me as a stranger; and I was not inclined to deceive him with an embarrassed air, as though my fate depended on his answer. I asked if he could give me any information of the Duke de Deni, of Madame and Mademoiselle Arlington, two English ladies, who lived under the Duke's and his brother, the Count Aluredus's protection. I know nothing, Monsieur, he replied, of the ladies you enquire after; and as I have not the honour to work for Monsieur le Duke, I know almost as little of him. I saw him, continued he, the other day, going to court; he looked in very good health; but he buried Madame

lc

le Duchess ten months ago.--I asked him what it was thought was become of the Count Aluredus. Alas ! replied he, the Count Aluredus, my dear old master, may God have mercy on his precious soul !—he too is dead ; a thousand times a day my poverty reminds me of his loss. He said no more ; he hurried away ; but as soon as his back was turned, I saw him take out a handkerchief, and apply it to his eyes. Poor Tastetee ! thy gratitude, nor thy poverty, shall not be forgotten by thy old master. I expended a tear on his honest sensibility ; I did not miss the sympathetic drop, when the blow that awaited fell upon me, and drove them down my cheeks in torrents.

Before I went to my own house, my anxious haste directed me to Arlington's

ton's. The doors, the windows, were all shut up—dire presentiment! I looked wishfully at them—it was early—perhaps they were yet in bed. I knock'd—knock'd—knock'd—my arm at length grew tired, my heart fainted within me. A labourer passing by told me no body had lived in that house for more than two years. My head fell upon my bosom. I caught hold of the peasant's shoulder, and staggered under the weight of my apprehensions. A mob were beginning to gather about us—I begged his assistance to lead me that way, pointing to my own house. He bore, rather than led me; without his support I never could have reached it. An old man, whose head had grown grey in the service of my father, before he entered into mine, heard my claim  
for

for admittance, and cautiously opened the door. He saw I was ill—he looked with concern on my condition; and when he suffered me to come in, it was an act of humanity in which duty had no part—in the poor feeble wretch of his commiseration, he could not distinguish the master to whom he owed obedience. I was creeping towards my own apartment; but this faithful servant stopt me; he said I might, if I pleased, repose myself in his room; but the way I was going, led to a part of the house (and he sighed deeply) to which, since the loss of his dear Lord, no stranger had been admitted. I stood still; I looked at him more fixedly:— is it possible, Duvergey, is it possible, my Duvergey has forgot me? My voice performed what my presence could not effect. The illusion vanished;

ed ; I saw my good faithful servant at my feet ; I saw him in a transport of joy that approached on the borders of insanity. My return appeared to him as a resurrection ; and it was some time before I could convince him that I existed in reality. The moment I found him capable of attending to any thing but his own extreme amazement, I commanded him to inform me of all he knew concerning Madame and Mademoiselle Arlington ; what was the reason they had quitted the house in which I left them ; and to what part of Paris they were removed ? I am sorry, he replied, (the word sorry struck to my heart) I am sorry that I should be obliged to acquaint your Lordship with tidings that will afflict you. My trembling increased ; I bade him go on, in a voice hardly articulate. The  
Lady.

Lady you enquire after has been dead upwards of three years, and Mademoiselle has since that time——Then it is not my child, my Annanette, that is dead, (cried I) praised be the gracious decrees of providence—it is not my child, my Annanette. Why do you not proceed? forgetting I had interrupted him—why do you not tell me with whom my Annanette has taken refuge? He begged my pardon; he said he was going to inform me, that ever since that time, Mademoiselle had been in the Duke de Deni's family, the Duchess herself having carried her home to the palace immediately on the death of her mother, and, for any thing he knew to the contrary, she was still there, though the Duchess had been dead more than ten months.

I now

I now felt as if the weight of a mountain had been taken from my breast. The grief I should at any other time have experienced for the fate of poor Arlington, was swallowed up in the certainty that my darling was still alive; that she was under the protection of a relation, who, without knowing himself such, had treated her with affection; that I should again hold her in my arms, and see her established in a state of affluence—a state of independence.

I was resolved now to acknowledge her—to settle my whole fortune on this child of my adoption, and never to lose sight of her more till I had fixed her in the world.—Blank!—blank!—blank! all these hopes—all these resolves.

To

To a mind long oppressed by sadness, how astonishing the operation of comfort, how strong the emotions, how sudden its influence!—With what electrical swiftness it enters our souls! From experience I make this observation; I felt it all on being told my dear child was in safety. My feelings of pain and pleasure were never guided by mediocrity: I have been destined to sustain all the shocks, all the smiles of fortune, in her most fickle humour, like an infant wanting the strength of reason to conduct his passions. The exaltation of my spirits was so great, that it elevated me to a degree of false vigour; I even ceased to remember the fatigues, the horrors, from which I had but just escaped; or, if they glanced by me, the recollection served me only to sweeten the joys of expectation.

As



As soon as I had given a decent appearance to my person, with a light heart and cheerful countenance, I drove to the Palace de Deni, pleasing myself on the way with the imaginary surprize of the Duke, with the transports of my Annanette, when the former should have received a note I dispatched to signify my arrival, and to say he might instantly expect me, for that I should not wait the return of my messenger. I observed this caution, on finding my death was so firmly believed in France, that my family had all gone through the common forms of mourning on the occasion. I admired the all-gracious, the inscrutable ways of Heaven; I adored its decrees; I said to myself, in the extatic gratitude of my soul, My God, I am oppressed with thy divine goodness! thou hast lifted me  
from

from the dark vale of misfortune. I shall never again be afflicted. This was my ejaculation as I entered the hall of the Palace de Deni; nor was I ever less prepared than at that moment to combat with disappointments severer than any I had yet experienced. A surly porter, as I was going, without ceremony, to the inner apartments, asked my name. I told him I was the Count Aluredus. His countenance dropt the air of command it had before assumed; and, bowing low, he informed me, the Duke had been some days at his country villa, from whence he was not expected to return till the latter end of the week following. But where is Mademoiselle Arlington? I hope, said I, hastily, she too has not left Paris. I came to my place but last night, he replied; I hardly know a single name in the house;

house ; but I suppose, my Lord, the person you enquire for is within : there is a Lady, continued he, who, I am told, governs the Duke's family ; and just now I received her orders to admit the Count Aluredus, though an hour before her commands were, that she would see no company. This was enough—transporting intelligence ! it could be no other than my beloved ; who else could it be that governed in the Duke's family ? I would not wait for a servant to conduct me ; I flew to the late Duchess's apartment, which I concluded was now occupied by my Aluredus—I knew she would be impatiently expecting me, and that my sudden appearance, though unannounced, would not alarm her. As I threw open the door, my paternal arms extended to receive her. I started back with an

exclamation of surprize, on being saluted by a young handsome woman, of a coquettish aspect; and in a studied dishabille, which had more in it of shew than taste or elegance. As she stepped forward to receive me, she could not but observe my embarrassment. I did not immediately enter into her character; I supposed she might be some acquaintance of Annanette's, whom the Duke had engaged, to prevent her being quite alone in his absence. Under this supposition I so far got the better of my visible mortification, as to meet her advances with civility. I beg your pardon, Madam, (said I, in some confusion) for so abruptly intruding on your privacy; I thought to have found no company in Mademoiselle Arlington's apartment; and my impatience to see that dear child, after

an

an absence of six years, will, I presume, be admitted an excuse for the rudeness I have undesignedly committed. Excuse, my dear Count, there needs no apology, replied she, (with an easy assured air) apologies are quite unnecessary ; I should be the most ungrateful creature on earth, not to receive as the highest honour, a visit from the brother of my friend. I was so astonished at these incomprehensible words, and the levity with which she delivered them, that I was unable to speak, and could think of nothing but the impropriety Annanette had shewn in the choice of a companion.—For the first time in my life I thought her faulty, and felt a degree of anger at her conduct, that would have kept me silent, had this flimsy talkative coquette given me an opportunity to be otherwise.

Nobody, continued she, with a detestable leer, could rejoice more than I did, when I received your note this morning—Your brother, Count, keeps no secret from me, which will explain why I happened to be the first of the family who had the good fortune to hear of your return. All the world have thought you dead and buried an age ago; but I had a presentiment, your billet contained agreeable tidings, even before I broke the seal.

Great Heaven ! what were my feelings whilst she ran on at this rate—the brother of my friend—your brother keeps no secret from me—the first of the family acquainted with my return ! —What expressions were these ! What was I to suppose ? My resentment to Annanette was inflamed; I looked on her

her as a poor undone girl ; but my resentment was ten times greater to the Duke de Deni, who had placed my once innocent lamb in the power of this destructive wanton—the slave of his criminal pleasures. That she was his mistress, his declared mistress, would not admit a doubt ; she had even dared to shock my ear with boasting of those honours she enjoyed by prostitution.. I was, in my own mind, fully convinced my lost Aluredus was still in this fatal house ; yet my rage burnt with such violence, at her condescending to live under the same roof with the *fille de joye* of a man who called himself her protector, that I formed the sudden resolution of going away without seeing, or so much as asking for her. I arose in an agony not to be described, and, without look-

ing towards the wretch before me, made to the door. Here I stopped ; the idea of my dearest sister glided through my soul ; methought she seemed to chide my impetuosity ; methought she bade me return, and save her daughter, —to save her at least from further infamy. I could not resist the pleadings of this imaginary vision, or rather the dictates of my own relenting tenderness, which a momentary reflection on her much-loved mother had nearly raised to its former standard. Madam, said I, turning hastily back, and taking the chair I had just quitted, I do not enquire on what footing you preside in my brother's family, or by what right you presume on liberties unbecoming any character but that of a married woman ; nay, often not permitted even to a wife.—The late Duchess would not have opened a note directed to the Duke.



Duke de Deni ; but that at present is not my business with you—my commands are, that you instantly go and bring to my presence Mademoiselle Arlington, to whom my visit was intended. I mean to take her from a companion and situation, which the freedoms you have given yourself, and to which you seem to suppose you are entitled, has not made me think unexceptionable for a young lady of honour and distinction, who has her own reputation and that of a noble family to support.

The creature did not appear at all hurt by my reproaches. She told me, with an easy assurance, that she did not apprehend the Duke was to account for his actions to any man ; and, for her own part, she would submit her's

to no authority but that of her holy confessor. Woman, (said I, interrupting her, with a haughty imperious accent) I ask not any account of thee or of thy actions. I trouble myself with neither—those of a brother, who has injured me in the tenderest point, who has made the child of my adoption the companion of a prostitute, I cannot behold with the same indifference—go, (continued I fiercely) this moment fetch the poor deluded Annanette, or shew me the room into which she has retired to avoid my just upbraidings—do this, or I swear by the Almighty, thou shalt not, even in the house of thy infatuated keeper, find protection from my vengeance.

I believe it was more owing to the determined manner in which I spoke,  
than

than from any real fear which she entertained that I should execute my threats, in a place where she commanded with absolute uncontroul—but, whatever was the motive, for the first time, she appeared rather intimidated, and desired I would permit her to defend herself against an accusation of which she was entirely innocent, though she saw with concern the supposition of her being otherwise, left her little hopes of removing my prejudice, or lessening my anger. I made her no answer; I was meditating whether it might not be best to hear what she had to say, before I saw Annanette, the better to judge what sort of reception she was entitled to, or whether I should insist on my former orders being obeyed, and take her away without troubling myself about a tale which, it

was more than probable, this bad woman would invent to answer some secret purpose. Before I could determine, she, taking my silence for a permission to proceed, did not wait for any other.—I see, my Lord, on what score my presence is hateful to you—I am, in your opinion, an improper friend for Mademoiselle Arlington; you are afraid by my example her morals are corrupted—you are sure she is at this very time under the Duke's protection—you think she is an inmate in his family; but, Count, you are deceived; I honoured Mademoiselle's virtues, without aspiring to her friendship, except by rendering her such services as even you must approve, when I have informed you of their nature. I had now no inclination to interrupt her, and she proceeded:—When Mademoiselle

selle was brought hither by my late Lady, (for I had the honour to serve the Duchess in quality of her first woman) at that time being innocent myself, the extreme affliction under which I saw Mademoiselle, both for the death of her mother, as well as for the uncertainty of your fate, my Lord, was so great, that it pierced my heart; and her melancholy had such an effect on me, that I have often wept in private over the reflection of her sorrows.—I felt myself much agitated, much interested, but was still silent.—Mademoiselle, my Lord, notwithstanding the Duke and Duchess treated her as their own daughter, was always so sweetly condescending to her inferiors, that it was impossible for me to avoid loving, and wishing to serve her. My Lady had not been dead three months,

when an opportunity offered of my serving her essentially. You, Count, who have been so many years absent, can form no idea of the delicacy of Mademoiselle's sentiments; but I saw that it would be impossible she should survive the slightest tarnish her character could receive. The Duke de Deni's age, together with her considering him as a father, rather than in any other light, made her, my Lord, see no impropriety in granting his request, that she would not leave this palace, at least till some necessary affairs, in consequence of the will you had left, were settled in her favour. I was the first to perceive the danger of her situation; her honour was dear to me, because I saw her happiness depended on its preservation, and I became the guardian of that honour so precious to her,

at

at the risque of forfeiting my own interest in a place of great emolument: Perhaps, my Lord, you may mistake my meaning; though it is in vain to deny on what footing I at present live with your brother, yet I solemnly declare, the Duke, as I believe, had never so much as once turned his eye towards me, as long as this house was the residence of Mademoiselle Arlington.—What, cried I, and is not my Annanette under this detested roof?—Oh! if thou hast been the preserver of her honour, I am no longer thy enemy; I will adore thee as the saviour of my peace—but did my brother—speak, Madam—could my brother—my soul shudders till you ease my mind of suspicions not to be borne.—

I understand

I understand you, my Lord; but though your doubts are not without foundation, yet the Duke may claim some indulgence on the score of——.

Hold, Madam, I will be the judge of that when I have heard you to an end; but, before you speak again on any subject, tell me in two words—Is my child in a place of safety?—was virtue the companion of her flight?

That the purest virtue, my Lord, accompanied her from hence, my life, my soul, shall answer—farther I cannot inform you.

Enough, and yet methinks I could listen to thee for ever—my child, my  
dear



dear child, is virtuous; praised be Heaven that she is virtuous—but how comes it you know not her destination?

Mademoiselle, my Lord, did not acquaint me with her intentions; she was sensible of my friendship, in taking the bandage from her eyes; but would not involve me in the Duke's displeasure, by accepting my assistance to further her escape. I did not, my Lord, even know the hour or the day she had fixed on for the accomplishment of her design; and, though the Duke has since used every possible endeavour to find out the place of her concealment, he has not yet been successful.

Blessed!

"Hence! I intended to see  
 Messrs de Providence, that he has not  
 succeeded!—by this I intended—  
 Better yet would be with what  
 means in the next hour, that  
 will begin into the power of a further  
 savage more terrible, more destructive  
 than the most atrocious murder of prey.  
 —Answer me the more question, and I  
 have done. Did this raise them—did  
 this savage mother ever insult Anna-  
 nette's decency with the brutal decla-  
 ration of his passion.

Not, my Lord, by an open confes-  
 sion, (replied she) but Mademoiselle  
 was very sensible at the end of his  
 third month of widowhood, that his  
 affection for her person was not of that  
 disinterested nature which she had be-  
 lieved



lieved it to be in the life-time of his Duchess.—How came you, Madam, (returned I) to know the suspicions she entertained?

With a flood of tears, my Lord, she confessed them to me; when for her security I was obliged to add to her alarms by communicating my own doubts, which almost amounted to certainty, and which made her determine to fly far from his pursuit; she left behind all the valuable presents the Duke had given her with profusion, and even those she had received from the Duchess.

How at that moment did I glory in my Aluredus. I asked my informer how the news of her flight was received by the Duke. I thought, answered she,

she, he would have gone distracted for some weeks after her elopement; but, at length, my assiduities moderated his affliction; and I did not think myself unfortunate in being the instrument to draw off his attention from the remembrance of Mademoiselle Arlington. That young Lady (continued she, with a harlot's smile) was so exceedingly beautiful, so very amiable, so uncommonly engaging, surely, my Lord, your brother's fault lessens as we consider the temptation—he had loved her from infancy as a father. Ah! my Lord, how easy the transition from one degree of love to another! No more of this, Madam, said I; as the preserver of my child's honour, you have a claim on my gratitude, and shall not lose the reward of a good action; Heaven itself will balance it  
against

against others you may have committed that are not unexceptionable; but, for the man who would have despoiled me of a treasure on which he knew my heart reposed—which, in a manner, I had intrusted to his guardianship—with that man my soul disclaims all friendship, all alliance—rather would I hug the rotten carcase of disease to my bosom, call it friend and brother, than ever again acknowledge either of those titles in the Duke de Deni, whose mind is infected with the leprosy of deceit, ingratitude, and vice. I do not tell you this, Madam, continued I, by way of expending in words any part of that resentment which is the effect of injuries too great for pardon, even if humanity was almost endowed with the mercy of Omnipotence—I tell it you with a design that he should not be

be



bade her proceed.—The discovery I have made was the effect of respect to your Lordship, who I saw was so greatly shocked at your first appearance, and of compassion for Mademoiselle Arlington—it occurred to me if you were acquainted with her real reason for leaving the Duke, you would for the future be less liable to impositions, or misled by false opinions, which might otherwise limit your search after that amiable young Lady. As these were my motives, continued she, I hope Count, you will have the goodness to conceal from whom you got your intelligence—was your brother to know what I have done, he would never forgive me ; I am contented with my situation ; and, if I am guilty of a crime in wishing to be continued in it, Heaven is merciful, and

and I have years enough before me for repentance ; I shall tell the Duke you have been here ; I shall tell him that on my informing you Mademoiselle was gone nobody knew whither, you had solemnly vowed never to see or hear from him again. Will this do, my good Lord, or is it necessary, in rendering you a service, I should displease my protector, and for ever forfeit his favour ?

I said, she might do as she pleased ; that she had nothing to fear on my part ; that I should bear about my wrongs in silence as long as, by her management, she could keep the Duke from molesting me with his presence. —She engaged to use her best endeavours to obey my directions ; and I took my leave, if not the most miserable,



able, the most disappointed of human beings. The most miserable I could not call myself. God Almighty had snatched my child from pollution : he had not permitted her degenerate uncle to add the horrid crime of incest to his catalogue of offences.

When I turned towards the gloomy prospect of complicated evils that threatened the evening of my days with storms and tempest, I should have thought myself excluded from every gleam of comfort ; but when I considered how much more wretched I might have been, how very narrowly I had escaped a misfortune which would have driven me to madness, my griefs became more supportable, and I was happy by comparison.

After

After this fatal visit to the Palace de Deni, I staid but one night in Paris. I could not suppose my child had concealed herself so near the enemy of her soul. I sought her in the environs for several months, till my little stock of health and spirits were so much wasted, that I came to Montpellier, in hopes to reinforce them enough to enable me to take a journey to your country, having from the first appointed agents in both kingdoms to forward her discovery.——Alas ! how like her fate to that of her beloved mother ! God forbid in all respects it should be similar.

I am still determined to pursue my first intentions of going to England, when I see the least probability of my existence lasting out a journey which,  
at

at present, I am as incapable of undertaking, as if not yet released from the shackles of slavery. My physicians, since I came here, have put me on a regimen of milk ; and I submit to all the modes they can devise to prolong a life, which, it is yet possible, may be cheered with the sweet smiles of my darling Aluredus. I dread the return of the Duke de Deni from Montpellier ; weak as I am, I dare not trust myself in the same place with him ; I would rather leave Paris at a moment's warning, than run the risque of his forcing an admittance to my presence. My servants informed me he had been most days at my house to enquire for me ; and I found many letters from him, waiting my arrival, which I have forwarded to him unopened. I begin to think he knew that I was at Montpel-

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lier, and came hither to persecute me ; if so I am fortunate in my escape—I have done with him for ever—was there a possibility of his being innocent, or even less guilty than he appears to be by proofs incontestable ;—was there a possibility, I repeat, of his being innocent, with what eagerness should I fly to meet his brotherly advances ! or less guilty than he really is, in such a case, all possible hope of a reconciliation may not have been cut off. Crimes like his, are not of a common complexion ; it was not a common seduction he attempted ; the object of his vile passion, whose angelic purity he would have sullied—he would have humbled even to prostitution—was the child of my love—the comfort of my life—the staff of my age ;—she was intrusted to his care in  
my

my absence, and was taught to look up to him for paternal support, for paternal protection ;—is not the nature of his guilt stained with every aggravating circumstance?

And now, my kind friends, am I come to that period which brings me to the subject on which, in the beginning of my narrative, I bespoke your assistance—you will not reject my prayer—I offer it in the confidence of assured friendship.—Should death prevent me from accomplishing the journey I meditate, to your care I bequeath the completion of that only unperformed action which would cause me to leave with regret a world, whose greatest charm it could ever boast for me was, the certainty of quitting it for a better at the end of my painful pilgrimage.




## LETTER XIX.

*Lady Alice Sinclear to the Countess of  
Hassard.*

Cavendish-Square.

**I** THANK you, dear Hassard, for your inimitable advice ; it is like yourself, the very quintessence of perfection. I have followed your instructions with as little reluctance as a bashful maiden accepts a rich lover,—the married dame of fashion a Cicisbeo,—or, with which every woman follows her own inclinations. I allow your Ladyship to be the first in the world  
L 3 for

for projection. I hope you will give me equal credit for execution ; but I do not ask your approbation before I have acquainted you with all my manœuvres. I treasured up your precious hints in my heart, till the little giddy affected coquette arrived in town, because there might have been danger in giving any friendly information to the old woman, whilst her daughter continued in the country. A thousand accidents might have brought them together ; my letter might have been produced, if for no other reason than to give the wise mother a title for scolding and lectures. This would have been an awkward circumstance enough ; one does not like, you know, in matters like these, where one chuses to conceal one's name, to become the subject of tittle-tattle to a parcel of no bodies ; besides, it might not have appeared





appeared quite the thing to Lady Mortington, our amazing intimacy considered. My apparent motive was vastly laudable, and ought to gain me her acknowledgments for my extreme care of her reputation, yet I will lay my life, stupid as she is, she would have discovered the contrivance.

It was monstrously provoking, that I dared not trust to any person the transcribing this charming letter; it went in my own hand, though disguised as much as possible. I hate to confide in servants; and, rather than the Selwins should not have it, I submitted to be my own amanuensis.—Those prodigious good sort of old-fashioned people, who, without moving from the smoke of their own chimnies, sit round their Christmas fire, nodding their wise  
L 4 heads

heads at each other, and railing at those who understand the art of living better than they do, are easily thrown out of their bias ; they are alarmed and frightened to death, if they think a daughter of their heavy, tottering, ivy-grown, unmodern mansion, is verging one inch beyond the straight line which they call prudence ; a line on which it has been ever the boast and glory of such odd folks, that all their females have walked steadily from generation to generation, without turning their stiff necks on the right hand or on the left. By what I have heard from Alicia, her mother is just such a piece of clock-work ; and, if I have not wound her up to my purpose, I am much mistaken. The least I expect from my machinations is, that the flirting Countess will receive Madam Selwin's

win's positive commands to avoid Derwent, who, *entre nous*, is come home a thousand times more irresistible than ever in my eyes; you know he has been always irresistible, or why my unconquerable aversion to Alicia? Now, I suppose, the mother's commands will be enforced by threats of papa, husband, and so forth: you understand me, Lady Hassard. Can any thing be more natural than my conjectures? Well, but after all, for I do not take obedience to be in the catalogue of Lady Mortington's weaknesses; after all, should she prove refractory, why, am I not still her bosom friend? Yes; and I will take friendly care that she shall have few opportunities of entertaining Derwent in private. They have not hitherto met; she has gone but seldom into public; she is a com-

plete mistress of those forms necessary to a woman of fashion. This I must confess in her favour ; and I know she would rather be imprisoned a whole month in her own apartment, than forfeit her pretensions to delicacy, by not appearing to the world amazingly fatigued with the immense journey of a hundred and twenty miles, performed only in the short space of three days. I share as much of my dear friend's retirement as I can possibly spare from the business of life. If pleasure is not our business, to what purpose do we live? Alicia knows my taste, and does not insist on my evenings ; my mornings I have given up without reluctance, from this one simple consideration, that I cannot spend them more agreeably or more usefully than in the circles of this new-coined Countess.

The

The whole town are crowding her drawing-room; novelty,—novelty, all the world are in ad after novelty. If we happen to be a moment alone, that moment is devoted to giving and receiving from each other a thousand assurances of everlasting friendship. I consult her on any little matters that come in my way; and I have sometimes had the ingenuity to frame others, when my stock of trifles have been exhausted, purposely to convince her my heart was incapable of concealment to so dear a friend.—Now, you know, should she limit her confidence to me, certainly she must be the most ungrateful of all confidants. There is but one subject on which I fear her reserve, or would give a pin for her confidence; perhaps she may cheat my expectations; but I will forgive her, if

she eludes my vigilance. I have no patience, that now she is married, she will not keep herself to herself. I think she might be contented with her Lord and his castle, without pushing her face on the world, to disturb the honest endeavours of us single girls, who are all dying for the lover she jilted. I never knew Derwent the slave but of one folly—his attachment to this insignificant ; what charms does she possess which are not to be found much more perfect in people vastly her superiors by birth, wit, fortune, beauty, figure, and polite knowledge? infatuation must have hood-winked his judgment, I will never believe the contrary. The world has nothing in its power so valuable to bestow as would bribe me not to be present at their first interview ;—it will probably be next

Thursday

Thursday at Cornelly's, where she intends to exhibit all her finery. She is monstrously false; for, notwithstanding my unremitting endeavours to make her confess she still loves Derwent, I can get her to acknowledge no such thing; yet she does love him I am positive; but when I tell her so, she laughs, shews her white teeth, and makes such odd answers, that I am often in an absolute passion at her teasing stupidity. I am not to be duped; she is far behind the mark, if she thinks to simper me out of my suspicions; my senses are all alive, and shall all be employed to blast her expectations. I shall leave you, to dress for Lady T——'s assembly. Adieu.

CONTINUATION.

## CONTINUATION.

Late as I return, I snatch up my pen to tell your Ladyship, I looked divinely, to tell you I have seen and talked to Derwent.——Ah, Lady Hassard! he is the most enchanting creature in the universe—so polite, so attentive to me;—not a word, a single word, of Lady Mortington. I was resolved to try of what mettle his heart was formed—I mentioned her name, and said, her Ladyship's indisposition had prevented her appearance that evening. What think you was his answer, spoke too with an air as if he had not heard me?—but that he did hear me is positive. I never, Lady Ann, saw an assembly more brilliant; is it possible there can be a beauty of any consequence in Britain, who has  
not



not contributed her whole stock of charms to form the lovely circle? What a collection of faces ; it may put any other country to the blush, at the advantage we have over them.——Dear Lady Hassard, how sweet, how polite, how elegant, the general compliment—it cost me a sigh—I sighed that it was not more particular. I will not despair—if his heart is really disentangled from its former thralldom, my glass tells me I shall have as good a chance as another ; but I must first get them together before I can form any certain idea of my success ; I will watch every word, every look, every turn in the countenance of either, and direct my motions accordingly. If I do not succeed, if I am destined to the mortification of seeing myself slighted, or regarded with indifference by Derwent,  
hear

hear the resolution I have taken: I will stay here just long enough to draw down the calumny of a busy world on the head of my rival—join in their condemnation—be the loudest in my censures on her conduct; and, having primed the whole town in scandal, shall leave them to fire on the enemy, and march off, to spend the remainder of my unsuccessful campaign in your quarters. I am not the first brave general who has come off second best in springing a mine, or besieging a fortress. I am persuaded you will receive me in my humiliating fall from glory; but pray tell me, shall we run no risque of being annoyed by the churl your husband?—I hope he will not forever continue obdurate; I wish devoutly he would take a fancy to any of the young flirts about town, who  
would

would jump at a coronet; some nobody like Alicia Selwin; such an event—and the rest follows of course. Adieu, my dear; know me for the friend who never could or will forsake you, and who hopes to see you once more advanced to your former splendour.

**LETTER**

## LETTER XX.

*Lord Derwent to Sir Philph West.*

Hill-street.

FORTUNE has been too severe ; I could almost forgive her first offence, but could quarrel with her for the last jade's tricks she played me. No sooner have I given over whining for a false mistress, than this same jilting deity finds out other modes to torment me. She has robbed me of a valuable friend. I regret your absence, my dear West, I regret it exceedingly ; I never stood  
more

more in need of your sensible advice, your lively humour ; the one would have assisted me in the management of my affairs, the other might have been my resource against a melancholy which at times oppresses me sadly. I shall always honour the memory of my father ; I shall always think of his goodness to me, not with that kind of sentiment which generally attends an heir just taking possession, but with the real sorrows of an affectionate son, who looks back on a thousand instances of paternal tenderness, with reverence and gratitude. Whilst I preserve in my own bosom a never-ceasing remembrance of the obligations I have to him, I mean not to be ostentatious in my griefs ; I would rather conceal than expose them. I do more ; I study to recover my usual cheerfulness ;  
I shun

I shun retirement, mix in public assemblies, and am already looked upon by the world as a follower of its customs, which are, I find, to lose the idea of our friends as soon as their remains are safely deposited. I am not, however, obliged to the world for flattering my politeness at the expence of my feelings; that it is polite to banish sorrow, or, what may be more properly called the appearance of sorrow, will not admit a doubt. I could give you a striking instance of this truth—such an instance—but ought I to expose my mother? Let me reflect a moment—yes, I will tell you; why should I endeavour to conceal from you an impropriety with which I dare answer, half the town are acquainted, without seeing it in the same light that I do; what would shock a son, might  
pass

pass unnoticed, or, perhaps, be set down to the account of fortitude, by an unconcerned spectator.

When I arrived in London, my dear father had been consigned to his peaceful grave, one whole week, or, according to the calendar of our modern dowagers, seven long days. I was dispirited with my recent loss, sick with crossing the water in a severe storm, and tired to death by a journey which I had posted from Montpellier for the sake of expedition. In this situation I reached St. James's-square ; it was about half an hour after nine in the evening. Before I came up to the house an attachment over the door informed me, I was too late for the purpose which had hastened me home. I did not expect to find my mother in the deepest affliction, nor

nor did I think my presence was absolutely necessary to her happiness; however, it was my duty not to neglect a moment in presenting myself to her, and I did it without even waiting to change my dress. I passed the porter without speaking; I was so struck at my first entrance, that, for a moment, I had lost the power of speech; he knew me; I returned his low salute, by moving my hat, and proceeded to my mother's dressing-room, beckoning the servants in waiting, that I would neither be announced or followed; my visit was not of ceremony; common forms were, therefore, unnecessary. Guess, dear West, guess, if you can, my astonishment, when, having gently opened the door half-way, my mother's voice broke upon my ear, exclaiming, in a loud key, against her ill  
luck



luck at being loo'd with ace, king, and two other trumps. Petrified with surprise, I knew not what to do, whether to turn back or to go forwards; the recollection of my dear father made me determine on the former; but my mother hearing the lock turn, her eyes were drawn towards the door; she got a glimpse of my face; the cards dropt from her hands; she flew towards me; she caught me in her arms; her head fell upon my shoulder, and —. I will go no further; the scene was too ridiculous. God forgive me; but I could not help thinking that it would be much more natural to put her tears down to the account of losing her game, rather than her husband; if I am too severe, if I err against the respect I owe my mother, reflect on what I owe the memory of my beloved father, and

and the fault, if a fault I have committed, will diminish by this interesting reflection. Her Ladyship was importunate with me to make my appearance to her visitors ; she had none with her but friends, she said ; friends, whose goodness inclined them to waste their time in trying to divert her melancholy. You may suppose I did not comply with a request of this nature ; she finding it impossible to prevail, returned to her company, and I retired to my old apartment in a disposition better imagined than described. I am now, Sir Philip, settled in a house of my own, in Hill-street ; I made the purchase of Hinchman, furnished as it stood when you saw it, and good enough in all conscience for a bachelor ; nor do I think I shall ever have occasion for a better on the score of matrimony.

matrimony. When the campaign is ended, and you return to England, repair hither, and heighten all my enjoyments, by partaking them ; we will live together in blessed singleness, the envy of more than half the husbands in this metropolis ; if ever we find ourselves in the way of temptation, a round of visits to such married families as I can lead you will restore us to our senses, or the Devil is stronger than I suspect.—Lady Mortington is in town ; her pert friend Lady Alice Sinclear officiously began a conversation about her the other evening at Lady T——s assembly ; I baulked her ill-natured, ill-mannered expectations, by pretending not to hear what she said : I saw her vile design, and resolved to mortify her : nothing could do it so effectually as my silence and inattention to the

VOL. II. M subject;

subject ; but for this single reason, I could, believe me I could have talked of Lady Mortington with the self-same indifference as I could have done of any other woman.

It is much more difficult to think than speak with indifference ; yet even this I have accomplished ; I shall neither seek or avoid a renewal of her Ladyship's acquaintance ; I adore her sister Lady Nelson ; she is the best, the most amiable of her sex ; for her sake then, wherever I meet Lady Mortington she shall receive those civilities from me, which, by her late behaviour, she lost all claim to on her own account.—By whatever is most dear and valuable to me, I swear, I would fly the kingdom rather than meet her again, if I could not see her without danger ;  
but,

but, secure in a thorough knowledge of my heart, I set danger at defiance, and have no fears of a relapse.—I would have you forget every thing I said about Alicia in my first letter from Paris ; it was written without consideration, in the heat of resentment, the rage of disappointed passion, and, perhaps too, of disappointed pride. Shew me the man who would not have felt himself hurt, putting love out of the question, to be left by his mistress for such a rival as Mortington ; shew me the man, and I will pronounce him to want the decent vanity common to human nature. The sentiments I expressed to you at the moment I was informed of her desertion, I now disavow ; honour shall ever dictate my actions ; honour was not consulted in

BOOK II. 2. my

my first determination : so far from endeavouring to disturb her married happiness, I should hate myself as a villain, could I even look with desire on the wife of another.—Whilst I was in France, I took pains to form two or three different attachments, not of a durable nature, but they answered my design, restored me to gaiety, served to while away my time, and put me into better humour with myself, consequently with the world, which, Misanthrope-like, I was beginning to turn my back upon in a pet of discontent. If, in this place, I give you a whimsical, unsought-for adventure, do me the justice not to think the repetition is meant to gratify my own vanity, but merely to make you smile.

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The Duke de Deni is unexceptionably the most polite, engaging, and affable of men; he did me the honour to distinguish me by a thousand kindnesses; his palace was my home; I have told you before, he would not allow me to think of any other; I delighted in his conversation; and we lived together, like father and son, on terms of the strictest intimacy. When first our acquaintance commenced, he was much disordered by an unfortunate breach between himself and the Count Aluredus, his only brother; my friend was certainly very highly injured; and the Count must be obstinate beyond conviction: but this is not to my story.


I omitted nothing in my power, to draw the Duke from that gloom by  
M 3 which

which I found him oppressed, and had the satisfaction to see my endeavours successful. He prevailed on me to put off my intended tour to Italy, and engaged me to accompany him to Montpellier. In our way thither. he proposed our spending a week with Lord Danswick, an English nobleman, who, on account of an impaired constitution, has lived twenty years in the South of France. Lord Danswick is a widower, with three daughters; when I have said the persons of these ladies are barely tolerable, I have said all that truth will admit. The good old man, their father, sees them with the eye of a ridiculous partiality, and discovers in them as many beauties as the most elaborate painter can possibly bestow on the favourite piece of his imagination. Whilst we were upon this visit, the  
emotions.



emotions of mirth which politeness obliged me to suppress, have more than once, by shifting it under a violent fit of coughing, been as near sending me into the other world, as if I had been strangled with a halter under the hands of a common executioner. I could not hear the infatuated father repeating a hundred times a-day the appellations, charming girls, lovely creatures, sweet angels, without paying this sacrifice to folly. You know my humour; therefore, it is needless to tell you I could not be in the house with charming girls, lovely creatures, and sweet angels, without giving them reason to suppose I did not receive their civilities with ingratitude. I vow to God, I never mentioned the word love to either of the divinities; my returns to their many attentions, were

Before I go farther in my own defence, I must give you an idea of Lady Fanny's character, such as it visibly appeared to be on my first arrival at Lord Danswick's. That I shall do, that you may not accuse her of any real sensibility, or me of wanting that tenderness which any other woman in her situation unaffected must have commanded. Lady Fanny had not a grain of real sensibility; an occurrence which happened in the family a few hours after we joined them confirmed me in this opinion; the eye that could look unmoved on the distressed objects by which I saw her surrounded, could not belong to a heart enriched with sensibility; if she can love, I will venture to say she can love only herself.—I will tell you, in very few words, why my aversion to her was unconquerable.



unconquerable. A poor woman expired at her father's gate, an infant crying in her arms. She passed by at that moment; and, whilst her father and sisters were giving directions of humanity, the flinty-hearted creature turned away, humming an affected air:—True, as I hope for mercy. Is this enough, or is it necessary to give you more of this sweet angel? The Duke, who had observed the threatening storm clearly as myself, thought as I did, that we had best make our escape before it broke over our heads, but was highly diverted at the serious light in which I saw so ludicrous an affair, and rallied me without mercy. We soon after signified our intention to take leave, which was so strongly opposed by our kind host, that we could not refuse him another day, without giving

him great offence. Just as this matter was settled, the Ladies descended from their dressing-rooms. Lord Danswick told them of what he called his and their misfortune, in not being able to make his villa so agreeable to his friends, as might prevail on them to honour it with their presence longer than till the next day. Lady Susan and Lady Margaret came forward, paid us their compliments, and said many civil things on the occasion; but my languishing Desdemona; confound her romantic airs!—with a loud cry, that sounded in my ears like the croaking of a raven, in a pretended fit, sunk down on the floor. Was ever man in such an awkward situation? the Duke and I stood planet-struck, gazing at each other; but compassion to the good old Lord drew us to her assistance;

assistance; and, as we were approaching, the Duke whispered in my ear, lifting up his hands, delicate distress! My torment would not recover, nor would I assist in bearing out the corpse; it was removed by servants to her own apartment, (with every mark of rude health flourishing on her countenance) followed by the chief mourners of the family. Never more, as long as I breathe, never will I speak or look at an affected ugly coquette; these creatures are a thousand times more dangerous than a first-rate beauty. Despair makes the former desperate, whilst the latter, conscious of her charms, and secure in their effect, takes no pains to draw in one poor fool, who may possibly withstand or escape her attractions. I do aver, there is more safety in making downright

right love to the one, than asking the other how she does, saluting her with your hat, or offering her your snuff-box. Instead of consoling me, the Duke laughed so immoderately, that I expected the corpse and all would have returned to have enquired the cause. I begged for Heaven's sake he would spare me at least till we were fairly out of the house. I told him I really was so ashamed of my own performance, that I could not stand against his raillery. The more I talked, the more serious I looked, the louder were his peals of laughter; but in the midst of this scene, when I was too much mortified either to laugh or cry, a servant, with great solemnity, informed me his Lord desired the honour of speaking to me in the library. I could have gone to an execution with  
as

as little reluctance as I obeyed this summons, having a strong presentiment why my company was requested. I could have treated the artful woman with the contempt she merited; but to hurt the good mistaken father by refusing his dowdy daughter, was hurting myself, and I appeared before him in all the consciousness of a guilty confusion. Numberless apologies on the part of Lord Danswick ushered in the important subject. He was just come from the chamber of his lovely amiable child; she had confessed to him, that Lord Bromsgrove, by the most flattering attentions, had found the way to her heart; that the grief of being assured he was about to leave the house, without declaring his intentions, had occasioned her sudden disorder. Confound the witch; what a charge was here!

here! I lost all patience; I could hear no more.—I am sorry, my Lord, very sorry, that I should be the cause of any uneasiness to a person who has made me his debtor on the score of many civilities; but your Lordship must give me leave, in vindication of my own character, to assure you, whatever Lady Fanny might think proper to alledge, that I am perfectly innocent of having shewn her any particular attentions;—such complaisance as a daughter of your Lordship's was entitled to, she has received in common with the other Ladies of your family; my assiduities have not exceeded the bounds of respect; upon my honour, my Lord, they have not. He was too polite to push this matter further; but said, he doubted not my honour or humanity; he was concerned his daughter

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ter had acted so foolishly; and was pleased to add, with great good humour, that he regretted to give up all hopes of an alliance, which, if agreeable to me, would have made him happy the remainder of his days. I bowed my acknowledgments; it was impossible to return a verbal answer; and immediately we joined the Duke. I saw no more of the Divinities that evening; and the next morning by break of day, I thank Heaven, we turned our backs on their celestial abode.

I am tired, miserably tired, of my subject; liking and disliking, in cases like this, have similar effects. I can think of nothing but the detestable Lady Fanny. So dear West, I bid you heartily farewell.

LETTER

## LETTER XXI

*Lady Alice Sinclair to the Countess of  
Hassard.*

Cavendish Square.

CONGRATULATE, give me joy,  
Lady Hassard. Poh! Why ask you  
for what I abound in already? I am  
joy all over; it sparkles in my eyes,  
and trembles at the very ends of my  
fingers—Such a conquest! Well; I  
have been so long the drudge of my  
own machinations, that any thing in-  
ferior I should have thought an insuf-  
ficient reward for the many tedious  
nights,

nights, the slavery of scheming has kept me waking, without reckoning the fidgets by day which have tormented me these three months; not that he swore, or even said, he loved me; but attentions so visible, looks so tender, a preference so mortifying, I saw it touched her to the very soul, I saw her chagrin through the thick mask of hypocrisy, with which she tried to veil it.

Dear, delightful Derwent! Though you should baulk all my other expectations, I will still adore thee, for having gratified my revenge, for piquing the vanity, the almost invincible vanity of my bosom friend.—Now, must you be tediously dull, and horridly insipid, if you do not by this time perfectly understand the nature of my triumph, and

and the cause of my present exultation. I do not take you to be either dull or insipid; yet, for you better information, I shall treat you with the whole pleasant rencounter; for, unless you are an absolute witch, you can never guess at the interesting particulars. According to my usual custom, I went this morning, between the hours of one and two, to visit my dear sweet Lady Mortington. Well; I found her alone; we embraced with our accustomed cordiality; for the violence of our friendship has this effect, that we appear as rejoiced to see each other after one night's separation, as if we had not met for years or ages. I spoke to her of a picture-auction in Pall-mall; I asked if she would venture out, having myself a passionate desire to see the collection, in which I had been told  
there

there were some pieces of great estimation. It seldom happens that I speak without design; but when I proposed this party, I had positively no design at all. I proposed it merely for the sake of variety. I found no company there to amuse me. She, as concealed as ever on the business of my heart; no hopes she would unbend; her subjects as insignificant as herself; so the consequence was, that I fell into a fit of yawning; and her insipid chit-chat, had I been bored with it half an hour, would have so vapoured me, that I should not have recovered in a century.—Oh! it was the luckiest, luckiest thought that ever crossed my imagination: Fortune stood behind the curtain; I did not see her, but I certainly must have felt her directing influence.——Shall we go, my dear Alicia?

had the assurance to entertain me with long accounts of an humble companion she had picked up, or her wise mother (much the same thing) had picked up for her; a mighty honour, truly, to make me the confidant of her creature's extraordinary excellencies. I expect she will next introduce me to her valet, and call him a nobleman in disguise. I did not chuse to quarrel with an idiot for an act of idiotism; but when she talked of bringing this mock Madam to town, I had no longer patience. I gave her to comprehend her toad-eater was not a companion for other people of distinction, who were not entitled to her secret services; or some hint like this; I do not exactly remember what. She had just sense enough to read my meaning, made an apology for being obliged, on the  
part

part of obedience, not to leave her behind in the country; and assured me I should be never incommoded with her presence.

Now you must know, Lady Harsard, the fool has really kept her word with such exactness, that I have not been able to get a glimpse of this odd body since they came up, till this morning, when my curiosity began to murmur, that it was withheld from a gratification so easily obtained; and at last my pride submitted to its instigations, which were become quite troublesome.—My dear, said I, you must let me see that Olivia I have heard of so often; if you have no use for her at your toilet, pray send her to me; there is no occasion, I find, for my absolutely avoiding her; she will know

her distance, and perhaps I may be entertained by her tattle whilst your Ladyship is dressing.—Indeed, Lady Alice, she replied, haughtily, I do not know what you mean by my having no use for Olivia; she is not my attendant; whenever she sits by me when I am at my toilet, I am pleased with her conversation, and think myself favoured;—I shall send her to you, but must desire, my dear, you will not receive her in any less respectable light than that of my friend, of whose merit I am every day more sensible. I shall be disappointed when you have seen her, if you do not confess her worthy of my friendship. Did you ever hear any thing half so insolent? It was not my business to drop her here, or she should have experienced my resentment; besides, I was resolved to see her creature;



creature; and to avoid a disappointment, did not think proper to dispute the mode in which I was to receive her. As soon as she turned her back, I carelessly extended myself on a sofa, full of wrath; which was mixed with a degree of impatience for the appearance of this important personage, on whose account I had been so discomposed by the saucy Countess. The door opened; my curiosity was doubled; I turned my eyes eagerly that way, and seeing one of the most elegant female figures that can be imagined, instead of the little mushroom I expected, I was actually rising to receive her—half ashamed to be discovered in my negligent position. Fortunately, she spared me the confusion of so absurd a condescension, by saying, with a modest air,—which, I must confess, was

attended by a *je ne sçai quoi* that startled me,—I hope, Madam, I am not an intruder; I am here to receive your Ladyship's commands, at the request of Lady Mortington, and should be sorry if my presence were to disturb your ease in any respect. My countenance altered; I looked her over from head to heel with a scornful air of contempt. Not in the least, Miss, said I, resuming my former posture, from which I was but half risen. When I saw how extremely beautiful she was, I could not think of any other appellation than Miss, insignificant enough to shew my disgust at seeing a dirt-sprung girl apeing the graces and dignity of fashion. You may sit down, Miss; I have forgot your name; pray put me right? My name, Madam, is Olivia Mildmay. And so child, you  
are

are under the protection, that is, you live with Lady Mortington. I looked her full in the face; a tear started at my supercilious glance. I fancy you have been unfortunate; but at present you can certainly want for nothing; I have long known your Lady; we have been intimate from children; and have often contributed to raise little people from distress. Lady Mortington is a charitable, good woman, Mrs. Olivia; I could repeat many instances of her feelings for poor bodies, if I did not suppose you very sufficiently convinced of her goodness, not to need any other precedent. I spoke this, my dear, merely to try if she had the least spark of that humility, which should belong to her dependent station; but could discover nothing like it. Instead of smiling and looking pleased at the cha-

rafter I had given her Lady, she pretended to sigh, as if she had been born a person of rank; and a faint blush, which became her infinitely more than there was occasion for, just tinged the middle of her cheeks. To tell you the truth, Lady Hassard, I would give the universe to command just such a blush when I next meet Derwent; her eyes, were full of something—I do not know what—I cannot define it—such a bustle as she threw into them, I almost expected they would have spoke; their odious animation came the nearest to speech of any thing I ever beheld. Bless me, child, what ails you? cried I. Why your eyes are quite terrible; are you seized with any sudden disorder?—I beg your pardon, Madam, returned the chit, with a smile of contemptuous mildness; I am perfectly

fectly well—perfectly composed—my heart and eyes are in unison; the latter express the sentiments of the former; and, if your Ladyship were acquainted with their language, you would discover nothing very terrible in either. Indeed, young woman, you speak mighty well; pray go on; I admire your composure—and I laughed; I pretend to no skill in eyes: Be so kind, child, to tell me in plain English, what your's meant to have said?—They meant, Madam, to have explained, that I applied with all humility, your late application: had I neglected to do this, the goodness of your endeavours to awaken me to a full sense of my poverty, would have failed in the well-meant design, for which, I presume, your Ladyship intended it; perhaps I have been unfortunate; perhaps

too, in my present happy situation, I might possibly have forgot my misfortunes. Lady Alice Sinclear has condescended to rouse me from my unguarded security; she has set before me, in characters I cannot mistake, how precarious the happiness of a friendless orphan, who is supported by charity. I thank you, Madam, for teaching me this humiliating lesson.


At this moment Lord Mortington entered; and, for the first time in my life, I saw him push his prim face into the room without wishing him at——: no matter where; but now I really rejoiced that he came so opportunely to my relief. I was got into a tête-a-tête, from which I felt I should not be able to extricate myself with becoming dignity. I confess that the assumed airs  
of

of this little, low, mean insignificant, this dependent, this creature, this toad-eater to the woman in the world I most despise, had the power to make me small in the sight of my own importance. I felt my face glow. I should die with shame, could I think she had observed my confusion. I took pains to avoid her pointed looks, and carelessly trifled with my muff the whole time she was addressing herself to me. If ever I bring such another dilemma on my own head, may I suffer the punishment my folly would deserve! My curiosity should have perished, had I known its gratification would have been the means of humbling me so egregiously as I have been humbled; I detest the subject; and, to make my vanity full amends, shall hasten to another, which is the superstructure on

which I build the completion of all my wishes. A dirty cit comes for his money; I must break off to send my steward orders to dispatch him.

## CONTINUATION.

Lady Mortington did not affront me by making the fair, conceited plebeian, one of our party to the auction: her Lord offered to be our escort: she looked as if she had rather trust to Providence for a protector, but did not dare to refuse him. Charmed, transported by a proposal so unexpected, I gave him a thousand acknowledgments, for the favour he intended us; I said, and I said it in the very sincerity of my heart, that there was not a man in the world I should advance to the honour of being my escort on this occasion.





occasion in preference to his Lordship. Can you doubt the truth of this assertion, or can you suspect me of the wicked design to alienate his trumpery heart from the Countess? No, no, Lady Hassard, on the contrary, instead of using any arts to divide the gentle pair, all the arts, all the contrivances I am mistress of, shall generously be employed in drawing them still closer to each other. I would, if possible, pull the blessed knot so very, very tight, that their persons at least should be inseparable, however far their minds may be asunder. Whenever I attend Lady Mortington to any place of public entertainment, the company of her Lord would make me feel quite comfortable;—such a husband, planted at her elbow, will give me ample security for her good behaviour; it will be no fault of mine,

mine, if he does not often grace our parties with his presence. I am so much his Lordship's debtor, for going with us this morning, that he is entitled to my best offices; nor shall his property in the bauble he has purchased, be invaded by a former bidder, if my unwearied diligent attentions can prevent the damage: yes, I am resolved to protect his honour at the expence of my whole precious time: no engagement, no business, no pleasures, shall call me one moment off my duty, if I should find it necessary to mount a constant guard of observation. Pish! I have all the reason in the world to suppose it will be quite unnecessary; my sweet Derwent's indifference could not be counterfeited; it was neither scornful or studied; his whole behaviour was politely cold, and negligently civil;:

civil; in short, it was just what I could have wished it to be.

You, my dear, you who are even better versed than myself in the thousand intricacies of deceit, tell me, I beseech you, if, in all its various windings, your penetration can discover one spark of love, one ember of preference for Lady Mortington, concealed under appearances so unfavourable to her, so favourable to myself. I shall be monstrously disappointed, if you do not confirm my sanguine hopes, amounting almost to certainty, that every combustible of this dangerous tendency is absolutely extinguished. Hear, then, the particulars:—Honour my discernment, and give me your best wishes, that my eyes may light up a passion in the breast of Derwent, superior

rior to any that has ever yet burnt for my rival.

Before you can be a competent judge of what is what, I must tell you all about it. We had scarce been three minutes in the auction-room, when Lord Mortington desired we would follow him to look at a picture, that, in his opinion, was extremely well worth our notice ;—his opinion did not appear to be singular ; it was supported by the multitude, who eagerly pressed to that part of the room at which it was fixed. I am a great admirer of fine paintings, and was horridly vexed at not being able to get near enough to see the piece to tolerable advantage. My mortification at being so disagreeably incommoded, I was expressing, in a tone that I believe was neither striking

striking for its affability or good humour, when Derwent, who was standing within the circle, happened to turn his head towards us ; he saw my difficulty to proceed, and stept forward to offer his assistance. Lady Mortington he had not yet perceived ; she was standing behind me, leaning on the arm of her husband ; it was myself who placed her in that enviable picturesque representation of sweet domestic felicity. Dear Lady Mortington, forgive my freedom ; your situation demands particular caution ; rest on your Lord's arm, we shall be strangely pushed about ; your foot may slip ; come, come, for once do not mind erring against fashion. I whispered this loud enough for the person I intended it should reach : He smiled, thanked me for my obliging hint ; and I had  
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the pleasure of seeing her chained to her oar, notwithstanding her utmost resistance, attended with such looks, directed against my officiousness, as seemed to threaten me with her everlasting displeasure. Well, as I was saying, when the divine Derwent approached me, he had not observed her Ladyship ; he offered his hand to conduct me through the crowd. I accepted it, you may be assured ; and turning my head exultingly over my shoulder, I said, with an air of triumph, I have no scruple of leaving you Lady Mortington under so good protection as your husband. I would not advise you to follow us ;—the heat will oppress you. Since I am so near Lord and Lady Mortington, said my charming, charming, Derwent, with an indifference that enchanted me, I shall

shall be ambitious of paying them my respects ;—will your Ladyship do me the honour of presenting me to your friends ?—You can certainly want no introduction, my Lord, replied I, smiling ; then turning to the Earl and Countess,—your Lordship may go forward—your own merits can never fail of procuring you a gracious reception from every woman, and on every occasion. The last severe words I did not speak with my tongue ; but if I mistake not, they were expressed to the purpose, by still more eloquent language.—Heavens ! what inimitable grace, what spirited dignity, informed his animated countenance, as he paid Lady Mortington the distant offerings of civility !—Not a sigh of regret—not a glance of reproach—alarmed my apprehensions ; all was profound composure,

posure, and determined coolness. With the same easy unembarrassed air, he accosted her clumsy Lord, who stood twirling his thumbs, and looking as if he could not help it. I could die with laughing at the contrast—such a contrast, person, and manners, O ! it was charming, infinitely charming ; yet Alicia had too much artful pride to let me see that she drew any comparison in favour of the former : well, well, no matter ; I forgive her art on this single consideration, that I know her soul must be full of a subject, which, in the moments of reflection, will sufficiently torment her. We parted friends, my Lord, (said the divine Derwent, when he offered his fine-turned hand to the acceptance of Mornington) we meet, I hope, on the same terms ; your friendship will be a considerable



considerable addition to my happiness ; for the continuance of your Lordship's felicity, my wishes are sincere and ardent. The heavy-headed Earl seemed pleased ; his clouded brow, which certain conjectures had overspread, cleared in an instant : dispositions the most suspecting must, sometimes, give way to conviction ; infatuation itself could not have mistaken expressions so strongly marked with indifference : he saw he had nothing to fear ; he met his advances with tolerable grace, accepted his friendship, and appeared to have forgot this Adonis had ever been his rival. Our conversation soon became general ; Derwent supported it with a gay unconcern, a natural vivacity that shewed a mind at ease, and a heart perfectly disencumbered from its former ridiculous attachment. He  
said

said a thousand obliging things to me, and looked more than he said : in his attentions to Lord Mortington, he was exceedingly polite, nor did his silence to the languishing Countess give me any cause to suspect he distinguished her even by resentment. When he spoke to me, it was on topics flattering to my judgment : To her he talked of her sister Lady Nelson, and other such trifles. If you are displeased at my imperfect sketch of conquest, tell me so in your next ; for positively at this time I can write no more.

My impatience to visit the poor mortified Countess is ungovernable : The instant I am dressed, for my evening excursions, I flash upon her in all the exultation of victory.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

